




*A. Collins.*

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ESSAYS,

ON

PICTURESQUE BEAUTY;

*&c. &c. &c.*



THREE ESSAYS :  
ON  
PICTURESQUE BEAUTY ;  
ON  
PICTURESQUE TRAVEL ;  
AND ON  
SKETCHING LANDSCAPE :  
TO WHICH IS ADDED A POEM, ON  
LANDSCAPE PAINTING.

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BY WILLIAM GILPIN, M. A.  
PREBENDARY OF SALISBURY ; AND  
VICAR OF BOLDRE IN NEW FOREST, NEAR LYMINGTON.

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TO

WILLIAM LOCK, Esq;

OF

NORBURY-PARK, in SURREY.

DEAR SIR,

THE following essays, and poem, I beg leave to inscribe to you. Indeed I do little more, than return your own: for the best remarks, and observations in them, are yours. Such as may be cavilled at, I am persuaded, must be mine.

A published work is certainly a fair object of criticism: but I think, my dear fir, we picturesque people are a little misunderstood with regard to our *general intention*. I have

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feveral

several times been surprized at finding us represented, as supposing, *all beauty* to consist in *picturesque beauty*—and the face of nature to be examined *only by the rules of painting*. Whereas, in fact, we always speak a different language. We speak of the grand scenes of nature, tho uninteresting in a *picturesque light*, as having a strong effect on the imagination—often a stronger, than when they are properly disposed for the pencil. We every where make a distinction between scenes, that are *beautiful*, and *amusing*; and scenes that are *picturesque*. We examine, and admire both. Even artificial objects we admire, whether in a grand, or in a humble stile, tho unconnected with picturesque beauty—the palace, and the cottage—the improved garden-scene, and the neat homestead. Works of tillage also afford us equal delight—the plough, the mower, the reaper, the hay-field, and the harvest-wane. In a word, we reverence, and admire the works of God; and look with benevolence, and pleasure, on the works of men.

In

In what then do we offend? At the expence of no other species of beauty, we merely endeavour to illustrate, and recommend *one* species more; which, tho among the most interesting, hath never yet, so far as I know, been made the set object of investigation. From scenes indeed of the *picturesque kind* we exclude the appendages of tillage, and in general the works of men; which too often introduce preciseness, and formality. But excluding artificial objects from one species of beauty, is not degrading them from all. We leave then the general admirer of the beauties of nature to his own pursuits; nay we admire them with him: all we desire, is, that he would leave us as quietly in the possession of our amusements.

Under this apology, my dear sir, I have ventured, in the following essays, to enlarge a little both on our theory, and practice. In the first essay (that we may be fairly understood) the *distinguishing characteristic* is marked,

of *such beautiful objects*, as are suited to the pencil. In the second, the mode of amusement is pointed out, that may arise from viewing the scenes of nature in a picturesque light: and in the third, a few rules are given for sketching landscape after nature. I have practised drawing as an amusement, and relaxation, for many years; and here offer the result of my experience. Some readiness in *execution* indeed, it is supposed, is necessary, before these rules can be of much service. They mean to take the young artist up, where the drawing-master leaves him.—I have only to add farther, that as several of the rules, and principles here laid down, have been touched in different picturesque works, which I have given the public, I have endeavoured not to repeat myself: and where I could not throw new light on a subject, I have hastened over it:—only in a work of this kind, it was necessary to bring all my principles together.

With

With regard to the poem, annexed to these essays, something more should be said. As that small part of the public, who personally know me; and that still smaller part, whom I have the honour to call my friends, may think me guilty of presumption in attempting a work of this kind, I beg leave to give the following history of it.

Several years ago, I amused myself with writing a few lines in verse on landscape-painting; and afterwards sent them, as a fragment (for they were not finished) to amuse a friend.\* I had no other purpose. My friend told me, he could not say much for my *poetry*; but as my *rules*, he thought, were good, he wished me to finish my fragment; and if I should not like it as a *poem*, I might turn it into an *essay in prose*.—As this was only what I expected, I was not disappointed; tho not encouraged to proceed. So

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\* Edward Forster esq; of Walthamstow.

I troubled my head no farther with my verses.

Some time after, another friend,\* finding fault with my mode of describing the lakes, and mountains of Cumberland, and Westmoreland, as too poetical, I told him the fate of my fragment; lamenting the hardship of my case——when I wrote verse, one friend called it prose; and when I wrote prose, another friend called it verse. In his next letter he desired to see my verses; and being pleased with the subject, he offered, if I would finish my poem (however carelessly as to metrical exactness) he would adjust the versification. But he found, he had engaged in a more arduous affair, than he expected. My rules, and technical terms were stubborn, and would not easily glide into verse; and I was as stubborn, as they, and would not relinquish the scientific part for the poetry. My friend's

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\* Rev. Mr. Mason.

good-nature therefore generally gave way, and suffered many lines to stand, and many alterations to be made, which his own good taste could not approve.\* I am afraid therefore I must appear to the world, as having spoiled a good poem; and must shelter myself, and it under those learned reasons, which have been given for putting *Propria quæ maribus*, and *As in præsentî*, into verse. If the rules have injured the poetry; as *rules* at least, I

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\* Extract of a letter from Mr. Maſon.

—————“ I have inserted conscientiously every  
 “ word, and phrase, you have altered; except the awkward  
 “ word *clump*, which I have uniformly discarded, whenever it  
 “ offered itself to me in my English garden, which you may  
 “ imagine it did frequently: in it’s stead I have always  
 “ used *tuft*. I have ventured therefore to insert it adjectively;  
 “ and I hope, I shall be forgiven. Except in this single  
 “ instance, I know not that I have deviated in the least from  
 “ the alterations, you sent.—I now quit all that relates to  
 “ the poem, not without some self-satisfaction in thinking it is  
 “ over: for, to own the truth, had I thought you would have  
 “ expected such almost mathematical *exactitude of terms*, as I  
 “ find you do; and in consequence turned lines tolerably  
 “ poetical, into prosaic, for the sake of precision, I should  
 “ never have ventured to give you my assistance.”

hope

hope, they will meet your approbation. I am,  
dear sir, with the greatest esteem, and regard,

Your sincere,

and most obedient,

humble servant,

WILLIAM GILPIN.

*Vicar's-hill,*  
Oct. 12, 1791.

ESSAY I.

ON

PICTURESQUE BEAUTY.



## ESSAY I.

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**D**ISPUTES about beauty might perhaps be involved in less confusion, if a distinction were established, which certainly exists, between such objects as are *beautiful*, and such as are *picturesque*—between those, which please the eye in their *natural state*; and those, which please from some quality, capable of being *illustrated in painting*.

Ideas of beauty vary with the object, and with the eye of the spectator. Those artificial forms appear generally the most beautiful, with which we have been the most conversant. Thus the stone-mason sees beauties in a well-jointed wall, which escape the architect, who surveys the building under a different idea. And thus the painter, who

compares his object with the rules of his art, sees it in a different light from the man of general taste, who surveys it only as simply beautiful.

As this difference therefore between the *beautiful*, and the *picturesque* appears really to exist, and must depend on some peculiar construction of the object; it may be worth while to examine, what that peculiar construction is. We inquire not into the *general sources of beauty*, either in nature, or in representation. This would lead into a nice, and scientific discussion, in which it is not our purpose to engage. The question simply is, *What is that quality in objects, which particularly marks them as picturesque?*

In examining the *real object*, we shall find, one source of beauty arises from that species of elegance, which we call *smoothness*, or *neatness*; for the terms are nearly synonymous. The higher the marble is polished, the brighter the silver is rubbed, and the more the mahogany shines, the more each is considered as an object of beauty: as if the eye delighted in gliding smoothly over a surface.

In the class of larger objects the same idea prevails. In a pile of building we wish to see

see neatness in every part added to the elegance of the architecture. And if we examine a piece of improved pleasure-ground, every thing rough, and slovenly offends.

Mr. Burke, enumerating the properties of beauty, considers *smoothness* as one of the most essential. “ A very considerable part of the effect of beauty, says he, is owing to this quality: indeed the most considerable: for take any beautiful object, and give it a broken, and rugged surface, and however well-formed it may be in other respects, it pleases no longer. Whereas, let it want ever so many of the other constituents, if it want not this, it becomes more pleasing, than almost all the others without it.”\*————

How far Mr. Burke may be right in making smoothness the *most considerable* source of beauty, I rather doubt†. A considerable one it certainly is.

Thus

\* Upon the sublime and beautiful, p. 213.

† Mr. Burke is probably not very accurate in what he farther says on the connection between *beauty*, and *diminutives*. —Beauty excites love; and a loved object is generally characterized by diminutives. But it does not follow, that all objects characterized by diminutives, tho they may be so

Thus then, we suppose, the matter stands with regard to *beautiful objects in general*. But in *picturesque representation* it seems somewhat odd, yet we shall perhaps find it equally true, that the reverse of this is the case; and that the ideas of *neat* and *smooth*, instead of being picturesque, in fact disqualify the object, in which they reside, from any pretensions to *picturesque beauty*.—Nay farther, we do not scruple to assert, that *roughness* forms the most essential point of difference between the *beautiful*, and the *picturesque*; as it seems to be that particular quality, which makes objects chiefly pleasing in painting.—I use the general term *roughness*; but properly speaking roughness relates only to

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because they are loved, are therefore beautiful. We often love them for their moral qualities; their affections; their gentleness; or their docility. Beauty, no doubt, awakens love; but it also excites admiration, and respect. This combination forms the sentiment, which prevails, when we look at the Apollo of Belvidere, and the Niobe. No man of nice discernment would characterize these statues by diminutives.—There is then a beauty, between which and diminutives there is no relation; but which, on the contrary, excludes them: and in the description of figures, possessed of that species of beauty, we seek for terms, which recommend them more to our *admiration*, than our *love*.

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the surfaces of bodies: when we speak of their delineation, we use the word *ruggedness*. Both ideas however equally enter into the picturesque; and both are observable in the smaller, as well as in the larger parts of nature—in the outline, and bark of a tree, as in the rude summit, and craggy sides of a mountain.

Let us then examine our theory by an appeal to experience; and try how far these qualities enter into the idea of *picturesque beauty*; and how far they mark that difference among objects, which is the ground of our inquiry.

A piece of Palladian architecture may be elegant in the last degree. The proportion of it's parts—the propriety of it's ornaments—and the symmetry of the whole, may be highly pleasing. But if we introduce it in a picture, it immediately becomes a formal object, and ceases to please. Should we wish to give it picturesque beauty, we must use the mallet, instead of the chissel: we must beat down one half of it, deface the other, and throw the mutilated members around in heaps. In short, from a *smooth* building we must turn it into a

*rough* ruin. No painter, who had the choice of the two objects, would hesitate a moment.

Again, why does an elegant piece of garden-ground make no figure on canvas? The shape is pleasing; the combination of the objects, harmonious; and the winding of the walk in the very line of beauty. All this is true; but the *smoothness* of the whole, tho right, and as it should be in nature, offends in picture. Turn the lawn into a piece of broken ground: plant rugged oaks instead of flowering shrubs: break the edges of the walk: give it the rudeness of a road: mark it with wheel-tracks; and scatter around a few stones, and brush-wood; in a word, instead of making the whole *smooth*, make it *rough*; and you make it also *picturesque*. All the other ingredients of beauty it already possessed.

You fit for your picture. The master, at your desire, paints your head combed smooth, and powdered from the barber's hand. This may give it a more striking likeness, as it is more the resemblance of the real object. But is it therefore a more pleasing picture? I fear not. Leave Reynolds to himself, and he will make it picturesque: he will throw the hair dishevelled about your shoulders. Virgil would  
have

have done the same. It was his usual practice in all his portraits. In his figure of Ascanius, we have the *fusos crines*; and in his portrait of Venus, which is highly finished in every part, the artist has given her hair,

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*diffundere ventis.\**

That lovely face of youth smiling with all it's sweet, dimpling charms, how attractive is it in life! how beautiful in representation! It is one of those objects, that please, as many do, both in nature, and on canvas. But

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\* The roughness, which Virgil gives the hair of Venus, and Ascanius, we may suppose to be of a different kind from the squalid roughness, which he attributes to Charon:

Portitor has horrendus aquas, et flumina fervat  
Terribili squalore Charon, cui plurima mento  
Canities inculta jacet. 

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Charon's roughness is, in it's kind, picturesque also; but the roughness here intended, and which can only be introduced in elegant figures, is of that kind, which is merely opposed to hair in nice order. In describing Venus, Virgil probably thought hair, when *streaming in the wind*, both beautiful, and picturesque, from it's undulating form, and varied tints; and from a kind of life, which it assumes in motion; tho perhaps it's chief recommendation to him, at the moment, was, that it was a feature of the character, which Venus was then assuming.

would

would you see the human face in it's highest form of *picturesque beauty*, examine that patriarchal head. What is it, which gives that dignity of character ; that force of expression ; those lines of wisdom, and experience ; that energetic meaning, so far beyond the rosy hue, or even the bewitching smile of youth ? What is it, but the forehead furrowed with wrinkles ? the prominent cheek-bone, catching the light ? the muscles of the cheek strongly marked, and losing themselves in the shaggy beard ? and, above all, the austere brow, projecting over the eye—that feature which particularly struck Homer in his idea of Jupiter\*, and which  
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\* It is much more probable, that the poet copied *forms* from the sculptor, who must be supposed to understand them better, from having studied them more ; than that the sculptor should copy them from the poet. Artists however have taken advantage of the pre-possession of the world for Homer to secure approbation to their works by acknowledging them to be reflected images of his conceptions. So Phidias assured his countrymen, that he had taken his Jupiter from the description of that god in the first book of Homer. The fact is, none of the features contained in that image, except the brow, can be rendered by sculpture. But he knew what advantage such ideas, as his art could express, would receive from being connected in the mind of the spectator with those furnished by poetry ; and from the just partiality of men for such a poet.

he had probably seen finely represented in some statue? in a word, what is it, but the *rough* touches of age?

As an object of the mixed kind, partaking both of the *beautiful*, and the *picturesque*, we admire the human figure also. The lines, and surface of a beautiful human form are so infinitely varied; the lights and shades, which it receives, are so exquisitely tender in some parts, and yet so round, and bold in others; it's proportions are so just; and it's limbs so fitted to receive all the beauties of grace, and contrast; that even the face, in which the charms of intelligence, and sensibility reside, is almost lost in the comparison. But altho the human form, in a quiescent state, is thus

poet. He seems therefore to have been as well acquainted with the mind of man, as with his shape, and face.—If by *καταρσις* *εποφρυσσι*, we understand, as I think we may, a *projecting brow*, which casts a broad, and deep shadow over the eye, Clarke has rendered it ill by *nigris superciliis*, which most people would construe into *black eye-brows*. Nor has Pope, tho he affected a knowledge of painting, translated it more happily by *sable brows*.—But if Phidias had had nothing to recommend him, except his having availed himself of the only feature in the poet, which was accommodated to his art, we should not have heard of inquirers wondering from whence he had drawn his ideas; nor of the compliment, which it gave him an opportunity of paying to Homer.

beautiful;

beautiful; yet the more it's *smooth surface is ruffled*, if I may so speak, the more picturesque it appears. When it is agitated by passion, and it's muscles swoln by strong exertion, the whole frame is shewn to the most advantage.—But when we speak of muscles swoln by exertion, we mean only natural exertions, not an affected display of anatomy, in which the muscles, tho justly placed, may still be overcharged.

It is true, we are better pleased with the usual representations we meet with of the human form in a quiescent state, than in an agitated one: but this is merely owing to our seldom seeing it naturally represented in strong action. Even among the best masters we see little knowledge of anatomy. One will inflate the muscles violently to produce some trifling effect: another will scarce swell them in the production of a laboured one. The eye soon learns to see a defect, tho unable to remedy it. But when the anatomy is perfectly just, the human body will always be more picturesque in action, than at rest. The great difficulty indeed of representing strong muscular motion, seems to have struck the ancient masters of sculpture: for it is certainly much harder to  
model

model from a figure in strong, momentary action, which must, as it were, be shot flying; than from one, sitting, or standing, which the artist may copy at leisure. Amidst the variety of statues transmitted from their hands, we have only three, or four in very spirited action.\* Yet when we see an effect of this kind well executed, our admiration is greatly increased. Who does not admire the Laocoon more than the Antinous?

Animal life, as well as human, is, in general, beautiful both in nature, and on canvas. We admire the horse, as a *real object*; the elegance of his form; the stateliness of his

\* Tho there are only perhaps two or three of the first antique statues in *very spirited* action—the Laocoon, the fighting gladiator, and the boxers—yet there are several others, which are *in action*—the Apollo Belvidere—Michael Angelo's Torso—Arria and Pætus—the Pietas militaris, sometimes called the Ajax, of which the Pasquin at Rome is a part, and of which there is a repetition more intire, tho still much mutilated, at Florence—the Alexander, and Bucephalus; and perhaps some others, which occur not to my memory. The paucity however of them, even if a longer catalogue could be produced, I think, shews that the ancient sculptors considered the representation of *spirited action* as an atchievement. The moderns have been less daring in attempting it. But I believe connoisseurs universally give the preference to those statues, in which the great masters have so successfully exhibited animated action.

tread;

tread ; the spirit of all his motions ; and the glossiness of his coat. We admire him also in *representation*. But as an object of picturesque beauty, we admire more the worn-out cart-horse, the cow, the goat, or the ass ; whose harder lines, and rougher coats, exhibit more the graces of the pencil. For the truth of this we may examine Berghem's pictures : we may examine the smart touch of Rosa of Tivoli. The lion with his rough mane ; the bristly boar ; and the ruffled plumage of the eagle\*, are all objects of this kind. Smooth-coated

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\* The idea of the *ruffled plumage of the eagle* is taken from the celebrated eagle of Pindar, in his first Pythian ode ; which has exercised the pens of several poets ; and is equally poetical, and picturesque. He is introduced as an instance of the power of music. In Gray's ode on the progress of poetry we have the following picture of him.

Perching on the scepter'd hand  
Of Jove, thy magic lulls the feathered king  
With ruffled plumes, and flagging wing :  
Quenched in dark clouds of slumber lie  
The terror of his beak, and lightening of his eye.

Akenfide's picture of him, in his hymn to the Naiads, is rather a little stiffly painted.

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With slacken'd wings,  
While now the solemn concert breathes around,  
Incumbent

coated animals could not produce so picturesque an effect.

But when the painter thus prefers the cart-horse, the cow, or the ass to other objects *more beautiful in themselves*, he does not certainly recommend his art to those, whose love of beauty makes them anxiously seek, by what means it's fleeting forms may be fixed.

Suggestions of this kind are ungrateful. The art of painting allows you all you wish. You desire to have a beautiful object painted—your horse, for instance, led out of the stable

Incumbent on the sceptre of his lord  
Sleeps the stern eagle ; by the numbered notes  
Possessed ; and satiate with the melting tone ;  
Sovereign of birds. —————

West's picture, especially the two last lines, is a very good one.

The bird's fierce monarch drops his vengeful ire,  
Perched on the sceptre of th' Olympian king,  
The thrilling power of harmony he feels  
And indolently hangs his flagging wing ;  
While gentle sleep his closing eyelid seals,  
And o'er his heaving limbs, in loose array,  
To every balmy gale the ruffling feathers play.

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in all his pampered beauty. The art of painting is ready to accommodate you. You have the beautiful form you admired in nature exactly transferred to canvas. Be then satisfied. The art of painting has given you what you wanted. It is no injury to the beauty of your Arabian, if the painter think he could have given the graces of his art more forcibly to your cart-horse.

But does it not depreciate his art, if he give up a beautiful form, for one less beautiful, merely because he could have given it *the graces of his art more forcibly*—because it's sharp lines afford him a greater facility of execution? Is the smart touch of a pencil the grand desideratum of painting? Does he discover nothing in *picturesque objects*, but qualities, which admit of being *rendered with spirit*?

I should not vindicate him, if he did. At the same time, a free execution is so very fascinating a part of painting, that we need not wonder, if the artist lay a great stress upon it.—It is not however intirely owing, as some imagine, to the difficulty of mastering an elegant line, that he prefers a rough one. In part indeed this may be the case;  
for

for if an elegant line be not delicately hit off, it is the most insipid of all lines: whereas in the description of a rough object, an error in delineation is not easily seen. However this is not the whole of the matter. A free, bold touch is in itself pleasing.\* In elegant figures indeed there must be a delicate outline—at least a line true to nature: yet the surfaces even of such figures may be touched with freedom; and in the appendages of the composition there must be a mixture of rougher objects, or there will be a want of contrast. In landscape universally the rougher objects are admired; which give the freest scope to execution. If the pencil be timid, or hesitating, little beauty results. The execution then only is pleasing, when the hand firm, and yet decisive, freely touches the characteristic parts of each object.

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\* A stroke may be called *free*, when there is no appearance of constraint. It is *bold*, when a part is given for the whole; which it cannot fail of suggesting. This is the laconism of genius. But sometimes it may be free, and yet suggest only how easily a line, which means nothing, may be executed. Such a stroke is not *bold*, but *impudent*.

If indeed, either in literary, or in picturesque composition you endeavour to draw the reader, or the spectator from the *subject* to the *mode of executing* it, your affectation\* disgusts. At the same time, if some care, and pains be not bestowed on the *execution*, your slovenliness disgusts, as much. Tho perhaps the artist has more to say, than the man of letters, for paying attention to his *execution*. A truth is a truth, whether delivered in the language of a philosopher, or a peasant: and the *intellect* receives it as such. But the artist, who deals in lines, surfaces, and colours, which are an immediate address to the *eye*, conceives the *very truth itself* concerned in his *mode* of representing it. Guido's angel, and

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\* Language, like light, is a medium; and the true philosophic stile, like light from a north-window, exhibits objects clearly, and distinctly, without soliciting attention to itself. In painting subjects of amusement indeed, language may gild somewhat more, and colour with the dyes of fancy: but where information is of more importance, than entertainment, tho you cannot throw too *strong* a light, you should carefully avoid a *coloured* one. The stile of some writers resembles a bright light placed between the eye, and the thing to be looked at. The light shews itself; and hides the object: and, it must be allowed, the execution of some painters is as impertinent, as the stile of such writers.

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the angel on a sign-post, are very different beings ; but the whole of the difference consists in an artful application of lines, surfaces, and colours.

It is not however merely for the sake of his *execution*, that the artist values a rough object. He finds it in many other respects accommodated to his art. In the first place, his *composition* requires it. If the history-painter threw all his draperies smooth over his figures, his groups, and combinations would be very awkward. And in *landscape-painting* smooth objects would produce no composition at all. In a mountain-scene what composition could arise from the corner of a smooth knoll coming forward on one side, intersected by a smooth knoll on the other ; with a smooth plain perhaps in the middle, and a smooth mountain in the distance. The very idea is disgusting. Picturesque composition consists in uniting in one whole a variety of parts ; and these parts can only be obtained from rough objects. If the smooth mountains, and plains were broken by different objects, the composition might be good, on a supposition the great lines of it were so before.

*Variety* too is equally necessary in his composition: so is *contrast*. Both these he finds in rough objects; and neither of them in smooth. Variety indeed, in some degree, he may find in the outline of a smooth object: but by no means enough to satisfy the eye, without including the surface also.

From *rough* objects also he seeks the *effect of light and shade*, which they are as well disposed to produce, as they are the beauty of composition. One uniform light, or one uniform shade produces no effect. It is the various surfaces of objects, sometimes turning to the light in one way, and sometimes in another, that give the painter his choice of opportunities in massing, and graduating both his lights, and shades.—The *richness* also of the light depends on the breaks, and little recesses, which it finds on the surfaces of bodies. What the painter calls *richness* on a surface, is only a variety of little parts; on which the light shining, shews all its small inequalities, and roughnesses; and in the painter's language, *enriches* it.—The beauty also of *catching lights* arises from the roughness of objects. What the painter calls a *catching light* is a strong touch of light  
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on some prominent part of a surface, while the rest is in shadow. A smooth surface has no such prominences.

In *colouring* also, *rough* objects give the painter another advantage. Smooth bodies are commonly as uniform in their colour, as they are in their surface. In glossy objects, tho smooth, the colouring may sometimes vary. In general however it is otherwise; in the objects of landscape, particularly. The smooth side of a hill is generally of one uniform colour; while the fractured rock presents it's grey surface, adorned with patches of greenward running down it's guttered sides; and the broken ground is every where varied with an okery tint, a grey gravel, or a leaden-coloured clay: so that in fact the rich colours of the ground arise generally from it's broken surface.

From such reasoning then we infer, that it is not merely for the sake of his *execution*, that the painter prefers *rough* objects to *smooth*. The very essence of his art requires it.

As picturesque beauty therefore so greatly depends on *rough* objects, are we to exclude every idea of *smoothness* from mixing with it? Are we struck with no pleasing image, when the lake is spread upon the canvas; the *marmoreum æquor*, pure, limpid, smooth, as the polished mirror?

We acknowledge it to be picturesque: but we must at the same time recollect, that, in fact, the smoothness of the lake is more in *reality*, than in *appearance*. Were it spread upon the canvas in one simple hue, it would certainly be a dull, fatiguing object. But to the eye it appears broken by shades of various kinds; by the undulations of the water; or by reflections from all the rough objects in its neighbourhood.

It is thus too in other glossy bodies. Tho the horse, in a *rough* state, as we have just observed, or worn down with labour, is more adapted to the pencil, than when his sides shine with brushing, and high-feeding; yet in this latter state also he is certainly a picturesque object. But it is not his smooth, and shining coat, that makes him so. It is the apparent interruption of that smoothness by a variety of shades, and colours, which produces  
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the effect. Such a play of muscles appears, every where, through the fineness of his skin, gently swelling, and sinking into each other—he is all over so *lubricus aspici*, the reflections of light are so continually shifting upon him, and playing into each other, that the eye never considers the smoothness of the surface; but is amused with gliding up, and down, among these endless transitions, which in some degree, supply the room of *roughness*.

It is thus too in the plumage of birds. Nothing can be softer, nothing smoother to the touch; and yet it is certainly picturesque. But it is not the smoothness of the surface, which produces the effect—it is not this we admire: it is the breaking of the colours: it is the bright green, or purple, changing perhaps into a rich azure, or velvet black; from thence taking a semitint; and so on through all the varieties of colour. Or if the colour be not changeable, it is the harmony we admire in these elegant little touches of nature's pencil. The smoothness of the surface is only the ground of the colours. In itself we admire it no more, than we do the smoothness of the canvas, which receives the colours of the picture. Even the plumage of the swan,

which to the inaccurate observer appears only of one simple hue, is in fact varied with a thousand soft shadows, and brilliant touches, at once discoverable to the picturesque eye.

Thus too a piece of polished marble may be picturesque; but it is only, when the polish brings out beautiful veins, which in *appearance* break the surface by a variety of lines, and colours. Let the marble be perfectly white, and the effect vanishes. Thus also a mirror may have picturesque beauty; but it is only from its reflections. In an unreflecting state, it is insipid.

In statuary we sometimes see an inferior artist give his marble a gloss, thinking to atone for his bad workmanship by his excellent polish. The effect shews in how small a degree smoothness enters into the idea of the picturesque. When the light plays on the shining coat of a pampered horse, it plays among the lines, and muscles of nature; and is therefore founded in truth. But the polish of marble-flesh is unnatural\*. The lights  
therefore

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\* On all human flesh held between the eye and the light, there is a degree of polish. I speak not here of such a polish

therefore are false ; and smoothness being here one of the chief qualities to admire, we are disgusted ; and say, it makes bad, worse.

After all, we mean not to assert, that even a simple smooth surface is in no situation picturesque. In *contrast* it certainly may be : nay in contrast it is often necessary. The beauty of an old head is greatly improved by the smoothness of the bald pate ; and the rougher parts of the rock must necessarily be set off with the smoother. But the point lies here : to make an object in a peculiar manner picturesque, there *must be* a proportion of *roughness* ; so much at least, as to make an opposition ; which in an object simply beautiful, is unnecessary.

Some quibbling opponent may throw out, that wherever there is smoothness, there must also be roughness. The smoothest plain consists of many rougher parts ; and the roughest rock of many smoother ; and there is such a variety of degrees in both, that it is hard to

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as this, which wrought marble always, in a degree, possesses, as well as human flesh ; but of the highest polish, which can be given to marble ; and which has always a very bad effect. If I wanted an example, the bust of arch-bishop Boulter in Westminster-abbey would afford a very glaring one.

say,

say, where you have the precise ideas of *rough*, and *smooth*.

To this it is enough, that the province of the picturesque eye is to *survey nature*; not to *anatomize matter*. It throws it's glances around in the broad-cast stile. It comprehends an extensive tract at each sweep. It examines *parts*, but never descends to *particles*.

Having thus from a variety of examples endeavoured to shew, that *roughness* either *real*, or *apparent*, forms an essential difference between the *beautiful*, and the *picturesque*; it may be expected, that we should point out the reason of this difference. It is obvious enough, why the painter prefers *rough* objects to *smooth*\*: but it is not so obvious, why the quality of *roughness* should make an *essential difference* between the objects of *nature*, and the objects of *artificial representation*.

To this question, we might answer, that the picturesque eye abhors art; and delights solely in nature: and that as art abounds with *regularity*, which is only another name

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\* See page 19, &c.

for *smoothness*; and the images of nature with *irregularity*, which is only another name for *roughness*, we have here a solution of our question.

But is this solution satisfactory? I fear not. Tho art often abounds with regularity, it does not follow, that all art must necessarily do so. The picturesque eye, it is true, finds it's *chief* objects in nature; but it delights also in the images of art, if they are marked with the characteristics, which it requires. *A painter's nature* is whatever he *imitates*; whether the object be what is commonly called natural, or artificial. Is there a greater ornament of landscape, than the ruins of a castle? What painter rejects it, because it is artificial?—What beautiful effects does Vandervelt produce from shipping? In the hands of such a master it furnishes almost as beautiful forms, as any in the whole circle of picturesque objects?—And what could the history-painter do, without his draperies to combine, contrast, and harmonize his figures? Uncloathed, they could never be grouped. How could he tell his story, without arms; religious utensils; and the rich furniture of banquets? Many of these contribute

tribute greatly to embellish his pictures with pleasing shapes.

Shall we then seek the solution of our question in the great foundation of picturesque beauty? in the *happy union of simplicity and variety*; to which the *rough* ideas essentially contribute. An extended plain is a simple object. It is the continuation only of one uniform idea. But the mere *simplicity* of a plain produces no beauty. Break the surface of it, as you did your pleasure-ground; add trees, rocks, and declivities; that is, give it *roughness*, and you give it also *variety*. Thus by enriching the *parts* of a united *whole* with *roughness*, you obtain the combined idea of *simplicity*, and *variety*; from whence results the picturesque.—Is this a satisfactory answer to our question?

By no means. *Simplicity and variety* are sources of the *beautiful*, as well as of the *picturesque*. Why does the architect break the front of his pile with ornaments? Is it not to add variety to simplicity? Even the very black-smith acknowledges this principle by forming ringlets, and bulbous circles on his tongs, and pokers. In nature it is the same; and your plain will just as much  
be

be improved *in reality* by breaking it, as *upon canvas*.—In a garden-scene the idea is different. There every object is of the neat, and elegant kind. What is otherwise, is inharmonious, and *roughness* would be disorder.

Shall we then change our ground; and seek an answer to our question in the nature of the art of painting? As it is an art *strictly imitative*, those objects will of course appear most advantageously to the picturesque eye, which are the most easily imitated. The stronger the features are, the stronger will be the effect of imitation; and as rough objects have the strongest features, they will consequently, when represented, appear to most advantage.—Is this answer more satisfactory?

Very little, in truth. Every painter, knows that a smooth object may be as easily, and as well imitated, as a rough one.

Shall we then take an opposite ground, and say just the reverse (as men pressed with difficulties will say any thing) that painting is *not* an art *strictly imitative*, but rather *deceptive*—that by an assemblage of colours, and a peculiar art in spreading them, the painter gives a semblance of nature at a proper distance; which at hand, is quite another thing  
—that

—that those objects, which we call picturesque, are only such as are more adapted to this art—and that as this art is most concealed in rough touches, rough objects are of course the most picturesque.—Have we now attained a satisfactory account of the matter ?

Just as much so, as before. Many painters of note did not use the rough stile of painting ; and yet their pictures are as admirable, as the pictures of those, who did : nor are rough objects less picturesque on their canvas, than on the canvas of others : that is, they paint rough objects smoothly.

Thus foiled, shall we in the true spirit of inquiry, persist ; or honestly give up the cause, and own we cannot search out the source of this difference ? I am afraid this is the truth, whatever airs of dogmatizing we may assume. Inquiries into *principles* rarely end in satisfaction. Could we even gain satisfaction in our present question, new doubts would arise. The very first principles of our art would be questioned. Difficulties would start up *vestibulum ante ipsum*. We should be asked, What is beauty ? What is taste ?——Let us step aside a moment, and listen to the debates of the learned on these heads. They will at least  
show

shew us, that however we may wish to fix *principles*, our inquiries are seldom satisfactory.

One philosopher will tell us, that taste is only the improvement of our own ideas. Every man has naturally his proportion of taste. The seeds of it are innate. All depends on cultivation.

Another philosopher following the analogy of nature, observes, that as all mens faces are different, we may well suppose their minds to be so likewise. He rejects the idea therefore of innate taste; and in the room of this makes *utility* the standard both of taste, and beauty.

Another philosopher thinks the idea of *utility* as absurd, as the last did that of *innate taste*. What, cries he, can I not admire the beauty of a resplendent sun-set, till I have investigated the *utility* of that peculiar radiance in the atmosphere? He then wishes we had a little less philosophy amongst us, and a little more common sense. *Common sense* is despised like other common things: but, in his opinion, if we made *common sense* the criterion in matters of art, as well as science, we should be nearer the truth.

A fourth

A fourth philosopher apprehends *common sense* to be our standard only in the ordinary affairs of life. The bounty of nature has furnished us with various other senses suited to the objects, among which we converse : and with regard to matters of taste, it has supplied us with what, he doubts not, we all feel within ourselves, *a sense of beauty*.

Pooh ! says another learned inquirer, what is a *sense of beauty*? *Sense* is a vague idea, and so is *beauty* ; and it is impossible that any thing determined can result from terms so inaccurate. But if we lay aside a *sense of beauty*, and adopt *proportion*, we shall all be right. *Proportion* is the great principle of taste, and beauty. We admit it both in lines, and colours ; and indeed refer all our ideas of the elegant kind to it's standard.

True, says an admirer of the antique ; but this proportion must have a rule, or we gain nothing : and a *rule of proportion* there certainly is : but we may inquire after it in vain. The secret is lost. The ancients had it. They well knew the principles of beauty ; and had that unerring rule, which in all things adjusted their taste. We see it even in their slightest vases. In *their* works, proportion, tho varied  
through

through a thousand lines, is still the same; and if we could only discover their *principles of proportion*, we should have the arcanum of this science; and might settle all our disputes about taste with great ease.

Thus, in our inquiries into *first principles*, we go on, without end, and without satisfaction. The human understanding is unequal to the search. In philosophy we inquire for them in vain—in physics—in metaphysics—in morals. Even in the polite arts, where the subject, one should imagine, is less recondite, the inquiry, we find, is equally vague. We are puzzled, and bewildered; but not informed. All is uncertainty; a strife of words; the old contest,

Empedocles, an Stertini deliret acumen?

In a word, if *a cause be sufficiently understood*, it may suggest useful discoveries. But if it be *not so* (and where is our certainty in these disquisitions) it will unquestionably *mislead*.

END OF THE FIRST ESSAY.

AS the subject of the foregoing essay is rather new, and I doubted, whether sufficiently founded in truth, I was desirous, before I printed it, that it should receive the *imprimatur* of sir Joshua Reynolds. I begged him therefore to look it over, and received the following answer.

London,  
April 19th, 1791.

DEAR SIR,

Tho I read now but little, yet I have read with great attention the essay, which you was so good to put into my hands, on the difference between the *beautiful*, and the *picturesque*; and I may truly say, I have received from it much pleasure, and improvement.

Without opposing any of your sentiments, it has suggested an idea, that may be worth consideration—whether the epithet *picturesque* is not applicable to the excellences of the inferior schools, rather than to the higher.

The

The works of Michael Angelo, Raphael, &c. appear to me to have nothing of it; whereas Reubens, and the Venetian painters may almost be said to have nothing else.

Perhaps *picturesque* is somewhat synonymous to the word *taste*; which we should think improperly applied to Homer, or Milton, but very well to Pope, or Prior. I suspect that the application of these words are to excellences of an inferior order; and which are incompatible with the grand stile.

You are certainly right in saying, that variety of tints and forms is picturesque; but it must be remembered, on the other hand, that the reverse of this—(uniformity of colour, and a long continuation of lines,) produces grandeur.

I had an intention of pointing out the passages, that particularly struck me; but I was afraid to use my eyes so much.

The essay has lain upon my table; and I think no day has passed without my looking at it, reading a little at a time. Whatever objections presented themselves at first view,\*

were

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\* Sir Joshua Reynolds had seen this essay, several years ago, through Mr. Mason, who shewed it to him. He then made

were done away on a cloſer inſpection: and I am not quite ſure, but that is the caſe in regard to the obſervation, which I have ventured to make on the word *pictureſque*.

I am, &c.

JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

To the rev<sup>d</sup>. Mr. Gilpin,  
Vicar's-hill.

### THE ANSWER.

May 2d, 1791.

DEAR SIR,

I am much obliged to you for looking over my eſſay at a time, when the complaint in your eyes muſt have made an intrusion of this kind troubleſome. But as the ſubject was rather novel, I wiſhed much for your ſanction; and you have given it me in as flattering a manner, as I could wiſh.

With regard to the term *pictureſque*, I have always myſelf uſed it merely to denote *ſuch objects, as are proper ſubjects for painting*:

ſome objections to it: particularly he thought, that the term *pictureſque*, ſhould be applied only to the *works of nature*. His conceſſion here is an inſtance of that candour, which is a very remarkable part of his character; and which is generally one of the diſtinguiſhing marks of true genius.

ſo

so that, according to *my definition*, one of the cartoons, and a flower-piece are equally picturesque.

I think however I understand your idea of extending the term to what may be called *taste in painting*—or the art of fascinating the eye by splendid colouring, and artificial combinations; which the inferior schools valued; and the dignity of the higher perhaps despised. But I have seen so little of the higher schools, that I should be very ill able to carry the subject farther by illustrating a disquisition of this kind. Except the cartoons, I never saw a picture of Raphael's, that answered my idea; and of the original works of Michael Angelo I have little conception.

But tho I am unable, through ignorance, to appreciate fully the grandeur of the Roman school, I have at least the pleasure to find I have always held as a principle your idea of the production of greatness by *uniformity of colour, and a long continuation of line*: and when I speak of *variety*, I certainly do not mean to confound it's effects with those of *grandeur*.

I am, &c.

WILLIAM GILPIN.

To sir Joshua Reynolds,  
Leicester-square.



E S S A Y    I I.

ON

PICTURESQUE TRAVEL.



## E S S A Y II.

ENOUGH has been said to shew the difficulty of *assigning causes*: let us then take another course, and amuse ourselves with *searching after effects*. This is the general intention of picturesque travel. We mean not to bring it into competition with any of the more useful ends of travelling: but as many travel without any end at all, amusing themselves without being able to give a reason why they are amused, we offer an end, which may possibly engage some vacant minds; and may indeed afford a rational amusement to such as travel for more important purposes.

In treating of picturesque travel, we may consider first it's *object*; and secondly it's sources of *amusement*.

It's

It's *object* is beauty of every kind, which either art, or nature can produce: but it is chiefly that species of *picturesque beauty*, which we have endeavoured to characterize in the preceding essay. This great object we pursue through the scenery of nature; and examine it by the rules of painting. We seek it among all the ingredients of landscape—trees—rocks—broken-grounds—woods—rivers—lakes—plains—vallies—mountains—and distances. These objects *in themselves* produce infinite variety. No two rocks, or trees are exactly the same. They are varied, a second time, by *combination*; and almost as much, a third time, by different *lights, and shades*, and other aerial effects. Sometimes we find among them the exhibition of *a whole*; but oftener we find only beautiful *parts*.\*

That we may examine picturesque objects with more ease, it may be useful to class them into the *sublime*, and the *beautiful*; tho, in fact, this distinction is rather inaccurate.

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\* As some of these topics have been occasionally mentioned in other picturesque works, which the author has given the public, they are here touched very slightly: only the subject required they should be brought together.

*Sublimity alone* cannot make an object *picturesque*. However grand the mountain, or the rock may be, it has no claim to this epithet, unless it's form, it's colour, or it's accompaniments have *some degree of beauty*. Nothing can be more sublime, than the ocean: but wholly unaccompanied, it has little of the picturesque. When we talk therefore of a sublime object, we always understand, that it is also beautiful: and we call it sublime, or beautiful, only as the ideas of sublimity, or of simple beauty prevail.

The *curious*, and *fantastic* forms of nature are by no means the favourite objects of the lovers of landscape. There may be beauty in a *curious* object; and so far it may be picturesque: but we cannot admire it merely for the sake of it's curiosity. The *lusus naturæ* is the naturalist's province, not the painter's. The spiry pinnacles of the mountain, and the castle-like arrangement of the rock, give no peculiar pleasure to the picturesque eye. It is fond of the simplicity of nature; and sees most beauty in her *most usual* forms. The *Giant's causeway* in Ireland may strike it as a novelty; but the lake of Killarney attracts it's attention. It would range with supreme  
delight

delight among the sweet vales of Switzerland; but would view only with a transient glance, the Glaciers of Savoy. Scenes of this kind, as unusual, may please *once*; but the great works of nature, in her simplest and purest stile, open inexhausted springs of amusement.

But it is not only the *form*, and the *composition* of the objects of landscape, which the picturesque eye examines; it connects them with the atmosphere, and seeks for all those various effects, which are produced from that vast, and wonderful storehouse of nature. Nor is there in travelling a greater pleasure, than when a scene of grandeur bursts unexpectedly upon the eye, accompanied with some accidental circumstance of the atmosphere, which harmonizes with it, and gives it double value.

Besides the *inanimate* face of nature, it's *living forms* fall under the picturesque eye, in the course of travel; and are often objects of great attention. The anatomical study of figures is not attended to: we regard them merely as the ornament of scenes. In the human figure we contemplate neither *exactness of form*; nor *expression*, any farther than it is shewn in *action*: we merely consider general shapes, dresses, groups, and occupations; which

we

we often find *casually* in greater variety, and beauty, than any selection can procure.

In the same manner animals are the objects of our attention, whether we find them in the park, the forest, or the field. Here too we consider little more, than their general forms, actions, and combinations. Nor is the picturesque eye so fastidious as to despise even less considerable objects. A flight of birds has often a pleasing effect. In short, every form of life, and being has it's use as a picturesque object, till it become too small for attention.

But the picturesque eye is not merely restricted to nature. It ranges through the limits of art. The picture, the statue, and the garden are all the objects of it's attention. In the embellished pleasure-ground particularly, tho all is neat, and elegant—far too neat and elegant for the use of the pencil ; yet, if it be well laid out, it exhibits the *lines*, and *principles* of landscape ; and is well worth the study of the picturesque traveller. Nothing is wanting, but what his imagination can supply—a change from smooth to rough.\*

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\* See page 8.

But

But among all the objects of art, the picturesque eye is perhaps most inquisitive after the elegant relics of ancient architecture; the ruined tower, the Gothic arch, the remains of castles, and abbeys. These are the richest legacies of art. They are consecrated by time; and almost deserve the veneration we pay to the works of nature itself.

Thus universal are the objects of picturesque travel. We pursue *beauty* in every shape; through nature, through art; and all its various arrangements in form, and colour; admiring it in the grandest objects, and not rejecting it in the humblest.

From the *objects* of picturesque travel, we consider its *sources of amusement*—or in what way the mind is gratified by these objects.

We might begin in moral stile; and consider the objects of nature in a higher light, than merely as amusement. We might observe, that a search after beauty should naturally lead the mind to the great origin of all beauty; to the

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first good, first perfect, and first fair.

But

But tho in theory this seems a natural climax, we insist the less upon it, as in fact we have scarce ground to hope, that every admirer of *picturesque beauty*, is an admirer also of the *beauty of virtue* ; and that every lover of nature reflects, that

Nature is but a name for an *effect*,  
Whose *cause* is God. —————

If however the admirer of nature can turn his amusements to a higher purpose ; if it's great scenes can inspire him with religious awe ; or it's tranquil scenes with that complacency of mind, which is so nearly allied to benevolence, it is certainly the better. *Apponatus lucro*. It is so much into the bargain : for we dare not *promise* him more from picturesque travel, than a rational, and agreeable amusement. Yet even this may be of some use in an age teeming with licentious pleasure ; and may in this light at least be considered as having a moral tendency.

The first source of amusement to the picturesque traveller, is the *pursuit* of his object—the expectation of new scenes continually opening, and arising to his view. We suppose the country to have been unexplored. Under this circumstance the mind is kept constantly in an agreeable

agreeable suspense. The love of novelty is the foundation of this pleasure. Every distant horizon promises something new ; and with this pleasing expectation we follow nature through all her walks. We pursue her from hill to dale ; and hunt after those various beauties, with which she every where abounds.

The pleasures of the chase are universal. A hare started before dogs is enough to set a whole country in an uproar. The plough, and the spade are deserted. Care is left behind ; and every human faculty is dilated with joy.

And shall we suppose it a greater pleasure to the sportsman to pursue a trivial animal, than it is to the man of taste to pursue the beauties of nature ? to follow her through all her recesses ? to obtain a sudden glance, as she flits past him in some airy shape ? to trace her through the mazes of the cover ? to wind after her along the vale ? or along the reaches of the river ?

After the pursuit we are gratified with the *attainment* of the object. Our amusement, on this head, arises from the employment of the mind in examining the beautiful scenes we have found. Sometimes we examine them under the idea of a *whole* : we admire the composition,

position, the colouring, and the light, in one *comprehensive view*. When we are fortunate enough to fall in with scenes of this kind, we are highly delighted. But as we have less frequent opportunities of being thus gratified, we are more commonly employed in analyzing the *parts of scenes*; which may be exquisitely beautiful, tho unable to produce a whole. We examine what would amend the composition; how little is wanting to reduce it to the rules of our art; what a trifling circumstance sometimes forms the limit between beauty, and deformity. Or we compare the objects before us with other objects of the same kind:—or perhaps we compare them with the imitations of art. From all these operations of the mind results great amusement.

But it is not from this *scientific* employment, that we derive our chief pleasure. We are most delighted, when some grand scene, tho perhaps of incorrect composition, rising before the eye, strikes us beyond the power of thought—when the *vox faucibus hæret*; and every mental operation is suspended. In this pause of intellect; this *deliquium* of the soul, an enthusiastic sensation of pleasure overspreads

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it,

it, previous to any examination by the rules of art. The general idea of the scene makes an impression, before any appeal is made to the judgment. We rather *feel*, than *survey* it.

This high delight is generally indeed produced by the scenes of nature; yet sometimes by artificial objects. Here and there a capital picture will raise these emotions: but oftener the rough sketch of a capital master. This has sometimes an astonishing effect on the mind; giving the imagination an opening into all those glowing ideas, which inspired the artist; and which the imagination *only* can translate. In general however the works of art affect us coolly; and allow the eye to criticize at leisure.

Having gained by a minute examination of incidents a compleat idea of an object, our next amusement arises from enlarging, and correcting our general stock of ideas. The variety of nature is such, that *new objects*, and new combinations of them, are continually adding something to our fund, and enlarging our collection: while the *same kind of object* occurring frequently, is seen under various shapes; and makes us, if I may so speak, more learned in nature. We get it more by heart.

He

He who has seen only one oak-tree, has no compleat idea of an oak in general: but he who has examined thousands of oak-trees, must have seen that beautiful plant in all it's varieties; and obtains a full, and compleat idea of it.

From this correct knowledge of objects arises another amusement; that of representing, by a few strokes in a sketch, those ideas, which have made the most impresson upon us. A few scratches, like a short-hand scrawl of our own, legible at least to ourselves, will serve to raise in our minds the remembrance of the beauties they humbly represent; and recal to our memory even the splendid colouring, and force of light, which existed in the real scene. Some naturalists suppose, the act of ruminating, in animals, to be attended with more pleasure, than the act of grosser mastication. It may be so in travelling also. There may be more pleasure in recollecting, and recording, from a few transient lines, the scenes we have admired, than in the present enjoyment of them. If the scenes indeed have *peculiar greatness*, this secondary pleasure cannot be attended with those enthusiastic feelings, which accompanied the real exhibition. But, in

general, tho it may be a calmer species of pleasure, it is more uniform, and uninterrupted. It flatters us too with the idea of a sort of creation of our own; and it is unallayed with that fatigue, which is often a considerable abatement to the pleasures of traversing the wild, and savage parts of nature.—After we have amused *ourselves* with our sketches, if we can, in any degree, contribute to the amusement of others also, the pleasure is surely so much enhanced.

There is still another amusement arising from the correct knowledge of objects; and that is the power of creating, and representing *scenes of fancy*; which is still more a work of creation, than copying from nature. The imagination becomes a camera obscura, only with this difference, that the camera represents objects as they really are; while the imagination, impressed with the most beautiful scenes, and chastened by rules of art, forms it's pictures, not only from the most admirable parts of nature; but in the best taste.

Some artists, when they give their imagination play, let it loose among uncommon scenes—such as perhaps never existed: whereas the nearer they approach the simple standard  
of

of nature, in it's most beautiful forms, the more admirable their fictions will appear. It is thus in writing romances. The correct taste cannot bear those unnatural situations, in which heroes, and heroines are often placed : whereas a story, *naturally*, and of course *affectingly* told, either with a pen, or a pencil, tho known to be a fiction, is considered as a transcript from nature ; and takes possession of the heart. The *marvellous* disgusts the sober imagination ; which is gratified only with the pure characters of nature.

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Beauty best is taught  
 By those, the favoured few, whom heaven has lent  
 The power to seize, select, and reunite  
 Her loveliest features ; and of these to form  
 One archetype compleat, of sovereign grace.  
 Here nature sees her fairest forms more fair ;  
 Owns them as hers, yet owns herself excelled  
 By what herself produced.

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But if we are unable to embody our ideas even in a humble sketch, yet still a strong *impression of nature* will enable us to judge of the *works of art*. Nature is the archetype. The stronger therefore the impression, the better the judgment.

We are, in some degree, also amused by the very visions of fancy itself. Often, when slumber has half-closed the eye, and shut out all the objects of sense, especially after the enjoyment of some splendid scene; the imagination, active, and alert, collects its scattered ideas, transposes, combines, and shifts them into a thousand forms, producing such exquisite scenes, such sublime arrangements, such glow, and harmony of colouring, such brilliant lights, such depth, and clearness of shadow, as equally foil description, and every attempt of artificial colouring.

It may perhaps be objected to the pleasureable circumstances, which are thus said to attend picturesque travel, ~~that~~ we meet as many disgusting, as pleasing objects; and the man of taste therefore will be as often offended, as amused.

But this is not the case. There are few parts of nature, which do not yield a picturesque eye some amusement.

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Believe the muse,  
 She does not know that un auspicious spot,  
 Where beauty is thus niggard of her store.

Believe

Believe the muse, through this terrestrial waste  
 The seeds of grace are sown, profusely sown,  
 Even where we least may hope. ———

It is true, when some large tract of barren country *interrupts* our expectation, wound up in quest of any particular scene of grandeur, or beauty, we are apt to be a little peevish; and to express our discontent in hasty exaggerated phrase. But when there is no disappointment in the case, even scenes the most barren of beauty, will furnish amusement.

Perhaps no part of England comes more under this description, than that tract of barren country, through which the great military road passes from Newcastle to Carlisle. It is a waste, with little interruption, through a space of forty miles. But even here, we have always something to amuse the eye. The interchangeable patches of heath, and green-sward make an agreeable variety. Often too on these vast tracts of intersecting grounds we see beautiful lights, softening off along the sides of hills: and often we see them adorned with cattle, flocks of sheep, heath-cocks, grouse, plover, and flights of other wild-fowl. A group of cattle, standing in

the shade on the edge of a dark hill, and relieved by a lighter distance beyond them, will often make a compleat picture without any other accompaniment. In many other situations also we find them wonderfully pleasing; and capable of making pictures amidst all the deficiencies of landscape. Even a winding road itself is an object of beauty; while the richness of the heath on each side, with the little hillocks, and crumbling earth give many an excellent lesson for a foreground. When we have no opportunity of examining the *grand scenery* of nature, we have every where at least the means of observing with what a *multiplicity of parts*, and yet with what *general simplicity*, she covers every surface.

But if we let the *imagination* loose, even scenes like these, administer great amusement. The imagination can plant hills; can form rivers, and lakes in vallies; can build castles, and abbeys; and if it find no other amusement, can dilate itself in vast ideas of space.

But altho the picturesque traveller is seldom disappointed with *pure nature*, however rude,  
yet

yet we cannot deny, but he is often offended with the productions of art. He is disgusted with the formal separations of property—with houses, and towns, the haunts of men, which have much oftener a bad effect in landscape, than a good one. He is frequently disgusted also, when art aims more at beauty, than she ought. How flat, and insipid is often the garden-scene! how puerile, and absurd! the banks of the river how smooth, and parallel! the lawn, and it's boundaries, how unlike nature! Even in the capital collection of pictures, how seldom does he find *design, composition, expression, character, or harmony* either in *light, or colouring*! and how often does he drag through saloons, and rooms of state, only to hear a catalogue of the names of masters!

The more refined our taste grows from the *study of nature*, the more insipid are the *works of art*. Few of it's efforts please. The idea of the great original is so strong, that the copy must be very pure, if it do not disgust. But the varieties of nature's charts are such, that, study them as we can, new varieties will always arise: and let our taste be ever so refined, her works, on which it is  
formed

formed (at least when we consider them as *objects*,) must always go beyond it; and furnish fresh sources both of pleasure and amusement.

#### END OF THE SECOND ESSAY.

E S S A Y    III.

ON

THE ART OF SKETCHING  
LANDSCAPE.



## E S S A Y    I I I .

THE *art of sketching* is to the picturesque traveller, what the art of writing is to the scholar. Each is equally necessary to fix, and communicate it's respective ideas.

Sketches *are* either taken from the *imagination*, or from *nature*.——When the *imaginary sketch* proceeds from the hands of a master, it is very valuable. It is his first conception; which is commonly the strongest, and the most brilliant. The imagination of a painter, really great in his profession, is a magazine abounding with all the elegant forms, and striking effects, which are to be found in nature. These, like a magician, he calls up at pleasure with a wave of his hand; bringing before the eye, sometimes a scene from history, or romance;

mance ; and sometimes from the inanimate parts of nature. And in these happy moments, when the enthusiasm of his art is upon him, he often produces from the glow of his imagination, with a few bold strokes, such wonderful effusions of genius, as the more sober, and correct productions of his pencil cannot equal.

It will always however be understood, that such sketches must be *examined* also by an eye *learned in the art*, and accustomed to picturesque ideas—an eye, that can take up the half-formed images, as the master leaves them ; give them a new creation ; and make up all that is not expressed from it's own store-house. — I shall however dwell no longer on *imaginary sketching*, as it hath but little relation to my present subject. Let me only add, that altho this essay is meant chiefly to assist the picturesque traveller in taking *views from nature*, the method recommended, as far as it relates to *execution*, may equally be applied to *imaginary sketches*.

Your intention in taking *views from nature*, may either be to *fix them in your own memory*  
 ———or

——or to convey, in some degree, your ideas to others.

With regard to the former, when you meet a scene you wish to sketch, your first consideration is to get it in the best point of view. A few paces to the right, or left, make a great difference. The ground, which folds awkwardly here, appears to fold more easily there: and that long blank curtain of the castle, which is so unpleasing a circumstance, as you stand on one side, is agreeably broken by a buttress on another.

Having thus fixed your point of view, your next consideration, is, how to reduce it properly within the compass of your paper: for the scale of *nature* being so very different from *your* scale, it is a matter of difficulty, without some experience, to make them coincide. If the landscape before you is extensive, take care you do not include too much: it may perhaps be divided more commodiously into two sketches.——When you have fixed the portion of it, you mean to take, fix next on two or three principal points, which you may just mark on your paper. This will enable you the more easily to ascertain the relative situation of the several objects.

In

In sketching, black-lead is the first instrument commonly used. Nothing glides so volubly over paper, and executes an idea so quickly.—It has besides, another advantage; it's grey tint corresponds better with a wash, than black, or red chalk, or any other pastile.—It admits also of easy correction.

The virtue of these hasty, black-lead sketches consists in catching readily the *characteristic features* of a scene. Light and shade are not attended to. It is enough if you express *general shapes*; and the relations, which the several interfections of a country bear to each other. A few lines drawn on the spot, will do this. “Half a word, says Mr. Gray, fixed on, or near the spot, is worth all our recollected ideas. When we trust to the picture, that objects draw of themselves on the mind, we deceive ourselves. Without accurate, and particular observation, it is but ill-drawn at first: the outlines are soon blurred: the colours, every day grow fainter; and at last, when we would produce it to any body, we are obliged to supply it's defects  
with

with a few strokes of our own imagination.”\*—  
 What Mr. Gray says, relates chiefly to *verbal* description: but in *lineal* description it is equally true. The leading ideas must be fixed on the spot: if left to the memory, they soon evaporate.

The lines of black-lead, and indeed of any *one* instrument, are subject to the great inconvenience of *confounding distances*. If there are two, or three distances in the landscape, as each of them is expressed by the *same kind* of line, the eye forgets the distinction, even in half a day’s travelling; and all is confusion. To remedy this, a few written references, made on the spot, are necessary, if the landscape be at all complicated. The traveller should be accurate in this point, as the spirit of his view depends much on the proper observance of distances.—At his first leisure however he will review his sketch; add a few strokes with a pen, to mark the near grounds; and by a slight wash of Indian ink, throw in a few general lights, and shades, to keep all fixed, and in it’s place.—A sketch

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\* Letter to Mr. Palgrave, p. 272, 4to.

need not be carried farther, when it is intended merely to *assist our own memory*.

But when a sketch is intended *to convey, in some degree, our ideas to others*, it is necessary, that it should be somewhat more adorned. To *us* the scene, familiar to our recollection, may be suggested by a few rough strokes: but if you wish to raise the idea, *where none existed before*, and to do it *agreeably*, there should be some *composition* in your sketch—a degree of *correctness*, and *expression* in the out-line—and some *effect of light*. A little *ornament* also from figures, and other circumstances may be introduced. In short, it should be so far dressed, as to give some idea of a picture. I call this an *adorned sketch*; and should sketch nothing, that was not *capable* of being thus dressed. An unpicturesque assemblage of objects; and, in general, all untractable subjects, if it be necessary to represent them, may be given as plans, rather than as pictures.

In the first place, I should advise the traveller by no means to work his *adorned sketch* upon

upon his *original one*. His first sketch is the standard, to which, in the absence of nature, he must at least recur for his *general ideas*. By going over it again, the original ideas may be lost, and the whole thrown into confusion. Great masters therefore always set a high value on their sketches from nature. On the same principle the picturesque traveller preserves his original sketch, tho in itself of little value, to keep him within proper bounds.

This matter being settled, and the *adorned sketch* begun anew, the first point is to fix the *composition*.

But the *composition*, you say, is already fixed by the *original sketch*.

It is true: but still it may admit many little alterations, by which the forms of objects may be assisted; and yet the resemblance not disfigured: as the same piece of music, performed by different masters, and graced variously by each, may yet continue still the same. We must ever recollect that nature is most defective in composition; and *must* be a little assisted. Her ideas are too vast for picturesque use, without the restraint of rules. Liberties however with

truth must be taken with caution: tho at the same time a distinction may be made between an *object*, and a *scene*. If I give the striking features of the *castle*, or *abbey*, which is my *object*, I may be allowed some little liberty in bringing appendages (which are not essential features) within the rules of my art. But in a *scene*, the whole view becomes the portrait; and if I flatter here, I must flatter with delicacy.

But whether I represent an *object*, or a *scene*, I hold myself at perfect liberty, in the first place, to dispose the *foreground* as I please; restrained only by the analogy of the country. I take up a tree here, and plant it there. I pare a knoll, or make an addition to it. I remove a piece of paling—a cottage—a wall—or any removeable object, which I dislike. In short, I do not so much mean to exact a liberty of introducing what does not exist; as of making a few of those simple variations, of which all ground is easily susceptible, and which time itself indeed is continually making. All this my art exacts:

She rules the foreground; she can swell, or sink  
 It's surface; here her leafy skreen oppose,  
 And there withdraw; here part the varying greens,

And

And croud them there in one promiscuous gloom,  
As best befits the genius of the scene.

The foreground indeed is a mere spot, compared with the extension of the distance: in itself it is of trivial consequence; and cannot well be called a *feature of the scene*. And yet, tho' so little essential in *giving a likeness*, it is more so than any other part in *forming a composition*. It resembles those deep tones in music, which give a value to all the lighter parts; and harmonize the whole.

As the foreground therefore is of so much consequence, *begin your adorned sketch* with fixing this very material part. It is easier to ascertain the situation of your foreground, as it lies so near the bottom of your paper, than any other part; and this will tend to regulate every thing else. In your rough sketch it has probably been inaccurately thrown in. You could not so easily ascertain it, till you had gotten all your landscape together. You might have carried it too high on your paper; or have brought it too low. As you have now the general scheme of your landscape before you, you may adjust it properly; and give it it's due proportion. —I shall add only, on the subject of fore-

grounds, that you need not be very nice in finishing them, even when you mean to *adorn* your sketches. In a finished picture the foreground is a matter of great nicety : but in a sketch little more is necessary, than to produce the effect you desire.

Having fixed your foreground, you consider in the same way, tho with more caution, the other parts of your *composition*. In a *hasty transcript* from nature, it is sufficient to take the lines of the country just as you find them : but in your *adorned sketch* you must grace them a little, where they run false. You must contrive to hide offensive parts with wood ; to cover such as are too bald, with bushes ; and to remove little objects, which in nature push themselves too much in sight, and serve only to introduce too many parts into your *composition*. In this happy adjustment the grand merit of your sketch consists. No beauty of light, colouring, or execution can atone for the want of *composition*. It is the foundation of all picturesque beauty. No finery of dress can set off a person, whose figure is awkward, and uncouth.

Having thus *digested the composition* of your *adorned sketch*, which is done with black-lead, you

you proceed to give a stronger outline to the foreground, and nearer parts. Some indeed use no outline, but what they freely work with a brush on their black-lead sketch. This comes nearest the idea of painting; and as it is the most free, it is perhaps also the most excellent method: but as a black-lead outline is but a feeble termination, it requires a greater force in the wash to produce an effect; and of course more the hand of a master. The hand of a master indeed produces an effect with the rudest materials: but these precepts aim only at giving a few instructions to the tyroes of the art; and such will perhaps make their out-line the most effectually with a pen. As the pen is more determined than black-lead, it leaves less to the brush, which I think the more difficult instrument.——Indian ink, (which may be heightened, or lowered to any degree of strength, or weakness, so as to touch both the nearer, and more distant grounds,) is the best ink you can use. You may give a stroke with it so light as to confine even a remote distance; tho such a distance is perhaps best left in black-lead.

But when we speak of an *out-line*, we do not mean a *simple contour* ; which, (however necessary in a correct figure,) would in landscape be formal. It is enough to mark with a few free touches of the pen, here and there, some of the breaks, and roughnesses, in which the richness of an object consists. But you must first determine the situation of your lights, that you may mark these touches on the shadowy side.

Of these free touches with a pen the chief characteristic is *expression* ; or the art of giving each object, that peculiar touch, whether smooth, or rough, which best expresses it's form. The art of painting, in it's highest perfection, cannot give the richness of nature. When we examine any natural form, we find the multiplicity of it's parts beyond the highest finishing : and indeed generally an attempt at the highest finishing would end in stiffness. The painter is obliged therefore to deceive the eye by some natural tint, or expressive touch, from which the imagination takes it's cue. How often do we see in the landscapes of Claude the full effect of distance ; which, when examined closely, consists of a simple dash, tinged with the hue of nature,  
intermixed

intermixed with a few expressive touches?— If then these expressive touches are necessary, where the master carries on the deception both in form, and colour; how necessary must they be in mere sketches, in which colour, the great vehicle of deception, is removed?—The art however of giving those expressive marks with a pen, which impress ideas, is no common one. The inferior artist may give them by chance: but the master only gives them with precision.—Yet a sketch may have it's use, and even it's merit, without these strokes of genius.

As the difficulty of using the pen is such, it may perhaps be objected, that it is an improper instrument for a tyro. It loses it's grace, if it have not a ready, and off-hand execution.

It is true: but what other instrument shall we put into his hands, that will do better? His black-lead, his brush, whatever he touches, will be unmasterly. But my chief reason for putting a pen into his hands, is, that without a pen it will be difficult for him to preserve his outline, and distances. His touches with a pen may be unmasterly, we allow: but still they will preserve *keeping* in his landscape,  
without

without which the whole will be a blot of confusion.—Nor is it perhaps so difficult to obtain some little freedom with a pen. I have seen assiduity, attended with but little genius, make a considerable progress in the use of this instrument; and produce an effect by no means displeasing.—If the drawing be large, I should recommend a reed-pen, which runs more freely over paper.

When the out-line is thus drawn, it remains to add light, and shade. In this operation the effect of a *wash* is much better, than of lines hatched with a pen. A brush will do more in one stroke, and generally more effectually, than a pen can do in twenty.\* For this purpose, we need only

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\* I have seldom seen any drawings etched with a pen, that pleased me. The most masterly sketches in this way I ever saw, were taken in the early part of the life of a gentleman, now very high in his profession, Mr. Mitford of Lincoln's inn. They were taken in several parts of Italy, and England; and tho they are mere memorandum-sketches, the subjects are so happily chosen—they are so characteristic of the countries they represent—and executed with so free, and expressive a touch, that I examined them with pleasure, not only as faithful portraits, (which I believe they all are) but as master-pieces, as far as they go, both in composition, and execution.









Indian ink ; and perhaps a little bistre, or burnt umber. With the former we give that greyish tinge, which belongs to the sky, and distant objects ; and with the latter (mixed more, or less with Indian ink) those warm touches, which belong to the foreground. Indian ink however alone makes a good wash both for the foreground, and distance.

But mere *light and shade* are not sufficient : something of *effect* also should be aimed at in the *adorned sketch*. Mere light and shade propose only the *simple illumination* of objects. *Effect*, by balancing *large masses* of each, gives the whole a greater force.—Now tho in the exhibitions of nature, we commonly find only the *simple illumination* of objects ; yet as we often do meet with *grand effects* also, we have sufficient authority to use them : for under these circumstances we see nature in her best attire, in which it is our business to describe her.

As to giving rules for the production of effect, the subject admits only the *most general*. There must be a strong opposition of light and shade ; in which the sky, as well as the landscape, must combine. But in what  
way

way this opposition must be varied—where the full tone of shade must prevail—where the full effusion of light—or where the various degrees of each—depends intirely on the circumstance of the *composition*. All you can do, is to examine your drawing (yet in it's naked out-line) with care; and endeavour to find out where the force of the light will have the best effect. But this depends more on *taste*, than on *rule*.

One thing both in light and shade should be observed, especially in the former—and that is *gradation*; which gives a force beyond what a glaring display of light can give. The effect of light, which falls on the stone, produced as an illustration of this idea, would not be so great, unless it *graduated* into shade. —In the following stanza Mr. Gray has with great beauty, and propriety, illustrated the vicissitudes of life by the principles of picturesque effect.

Still where rosy pleasure leads,  
See a kindred grief pursue:  
Behind the steps, which misery treads,  
Approaching comfort view.  
The hues of bliss more brightly glow,  
Chastised by sabler tints of woe;  
And, blended, form with artful strife,  
The strength, and harmony of life.

I may



CACILIE Q. CRITICAL F.  
METELIAE. CRASS.

I may farther add, that the production of an *effect* is particularly necessary in *drawing*. In *painting*, colour in some degree makes up the deficiency: but in simple clair-obscur there is no succedaneum. It's force depends on effect; the virtue of which is such, that it will give a value even to a barren subject. Like striking the chords of a musical instrument, it will produce harmony, without any richness of composition.

It is farther to be observed, that when objects *are in shadow*, the light, (as it is then a reflected one,) falls on the opposite side to that, on which it falls, when they are enlightened.

In *adorning your sketch*, a figure, or two may be introduced with propriety. By figures I mean moving objects, as waggons, and boats, as well as cattle, and men. But they should be introduced sparingly. In profusion they are affected. Their chief use is, to mark a road—to break a piece of foreground—to point out the horizon in a sea-view—or to carry off the distance of retiring water by the contrast of a dark sail, not quite so distant, placed before it. But in figures thus designed for the ornament of a sketch, a few slight touches

touches are sufficient. Attempts at finishing offend.\*

Among trees, little distinction need be made, unless you introduce the pine, or the cypress, or some other singular form. The oak, the ash, and the elm, which bear a distant resemblance to each other, may all be characterized alike. In a sketch, it is enough to mark *a tree*. One distinction indeed is often necessary even in sketches; and that is, between full-leaved trees, and those of straggling ramification. In composition we have often occasion for both, and therefore the hand should be used readily to execute either. If we have a general idea of the oak, for instance, as a light tree; and of the beech as a heavy one, it is sufficient.

It adds, I think, to the beauty of a sketch to stain the paper slightly with a reddish, or yellowish tinge; the use of which is to give a more pleasing tint to the ground of the drawing by taking away the glare of the paper. It adds also, if it be not too strong, a degree of harmony to the rawness of black, and white.

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\* See the preceding essay.





This tinge may be laid on, either before, or after the drawing is made. In general, I should prefer the latter method; because, while the drawing is yet on white paper, you may correct it with a sponge, dipt in water; which will, in a good degree, efface Indian ink. But if you rub out any part, *after* the drawing is stained, you cannot easily lay the stain again upon the rubbed part without the appearance of a patch.

Some chuse rather to add a little colour to their sketches. My instructions attempt not the art of mixing a variety of tints; and finishing a drawing from nature; which is generally executed in colours from the beginning, without any use of Indian ink; except as a grey tint, uniting with other colours. This indeed, when chastly executed, (which is not often the case) exceeds in beauty every other species of drawing. It is however beyond my skill to give any instruction for this mode of drawing. All I mean, is only to offer a modest way of tinting a sketch already finished in Indian ink. By the addition of a little colour I mean only to give some distinction  
to

to objects; and introduce rather a gayer stile into a landscape.

When you have finished your sketch therefore with Indian ink, as far as you propose, tinge the whole over with some light horizon hue. It may be the rosy tint of morning; or the more ruddy one of evening; or it may incline more to a yellowish, or a greyish cast. As a specimen an evening hue is given. The first tint you spread over your drawing, is composed of light red, and oker, which make an orange. It may incline to one, or the other, as you chuse. In this example it inclines rather to the former. By washing this tint over your *whole drawing*, you lay a foundation for harmony. When this wash is nearly dry, repeat it in the horizon; softening it off into the sky, as you ascend.—Take next a purple tint, composed of lake, and blue, inclining rather to the former; and with this, when your first wash is dry, form your clouds; and then spread it, as you did the first tint, over your *whole drawing*, except where you leave the horizon-tint. This still strengthens the idea of harmony. Your sky, and distance are now finished.

You

You proceed next to your *middle*, and *fore-grounds*; in both which you distinguish between the *soil*, and the *vegetation*. Wash the *middle-grounds* with a little umber. This will be sufficient for the *soil*. The *soil* of the *foreground* you may go over with a little light red. The *vegetation* of each may be washed with a green, composed of blue, and oker; adding a little more oker as you proceed nearer the eye; and on the nearest grounds a little burnt terra Sienna. This is sufficient for the *middle-grounds*. The *foreground* may farther want a little heightening both in the *soil*, and *vegetation*. In the *soil* it may be given in the lights with burnt terra Sienna; mixing in the shadows a little lake: and in the *vegetation* with gallstone; touched in places, and occasionally varied, with a little burnt terra Sienna.

Trees on the foreground are considered as a part of it; and their foliage may be coloured like the vegetation in their neighbourhood. Their stems may be touched with burnt terra Sienna.—Trees, in middle distances are darker than the lawns, on which they stand. They must therefore be touched twice over with the tint, which is given only once to the lawn.

If you represent clouds with bright edges, the edges must be left in the first orange; while the tint over the other part of the horizon is repeated, as was mentioned before.

A lowering, cloudy sky is represented by, what is called, a grey tint, composed of lake, blue, and oker. As the shadow deepens, the tint should incline more to blue.

The several tints mentioned in the above process, may perhaps the most easily be mixed before you begin; especially if your drawing be large. Rub the raw colours in little saucers: keep them clean, and distinct; and from them, mix your tints in other little vessels.

I shall only add, that the *strength of the colouring* you give your sketch, must depend on the height, to which you have carried the Indian ink *finishing*. If it be only a slight sketch, it will bear only a light wash of colour.

This mode however of tinting a drawing, even when you tint it as high as these instructions reach, is by no means calculated to produce any great effect of colouring: but it is at least sufficient to preserve harmony. *This* you may preserve: an *effect of colouring* you cannot easily attain. It is something how-  
ever

ever to avoid a disagreeable excess; and there is nothing surely so disagreeable to a correct eye as a tinted drawing (such as we often see) in which greens, and blues, and reds, and yellows are daubed without any attention to harmony. It is to the picturesque eye, what a discord of harsh notes is to a musical ear.

But the advocate for these glaring tints may perhaps say, he does not make his sky more blue than nature; nor his grass, and trees more green.

Perhaps so: but unless he could work up his drawing with the finishing of nature, he will find the effect very unequal. Nature mixes a variety of semitints with her brightest colours: and tho the eye cannot readily separate them, they have a general chastizing effect; and keep the several tints of landscape within proper bounds, which a glare of deep colours cannot do. Besides, this chastizing hue is produced in nature by numberless little shadows, beyond the attention of art, which she throws on leaves, and piles of grass, and every other minute object; all which, tho not easily distinguished in *particulars*, tells *in the whole*, and is continually chastening the hues of nature.

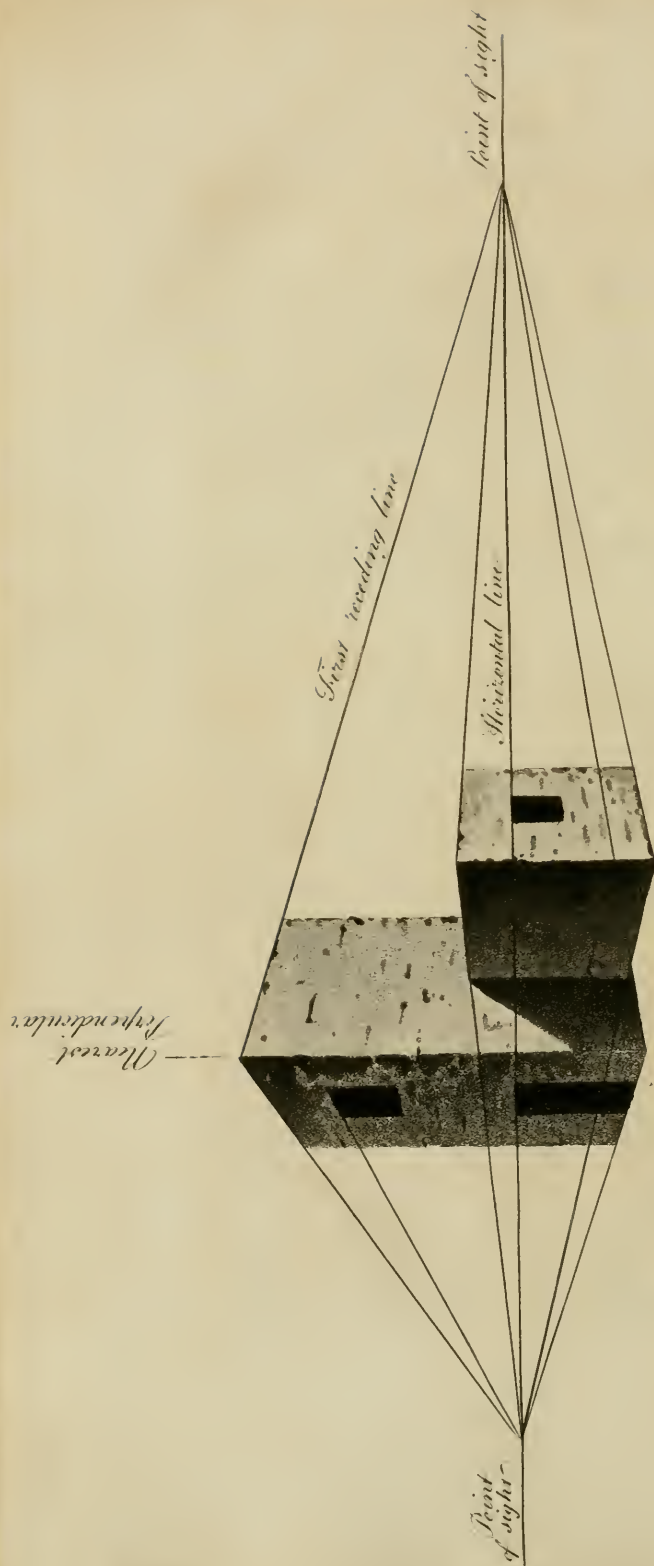
Before I conclude these remarks on sketching, it may be useful to add a few words, and but a few, on perspective. The nicer parts of it contain many difficulties; and are of little use in common landscape: but as a building, now and then, occurs, which requires some little knowledge of perspective, the subject should not be left wholly untouched.

If a building stand exactly in front, none of its lines can go off in perspective: but if it stand with a corner to the eye, as picturesque buildings commonly do, its lines will appear to recede. In what manner they recede, the following mechanical method may explain.

Hold horizontally between your eye, and the building you draw, a flat ruler, till you see only the edge of it. Where it cuts the *nearest perpendicular* of the building, which you have already just traced on your paper, make a *mark*; and draw a slight line through that part, parallel with the bottom of your paper. This is called the *horizontal line*, and regulates the whole perspective. Observe next the angle, which the uppermost of these reced-

ing





ing lines makes with the *nearest perpendicular* of the building; and continue that receding line till it meet the *horizontal line*. From the point, where it intersects, draw another line to the bottom of the *nearest perpendicular*. This gives you the perspective of the base. In the same manner all the lines, which recede, on both sides, of the building; as well above, as below the *horizontal line*—windows, doors, and projections of every kind, (on the same plane)—are regulated. The points on the *horizontal line*, in which these receding lines unite, are called *points of sight*.

What is here called the *point of sight*, is called by Brook Taylor; and perhaps with more propriety, the *vanishing point*.

After all, however, from the mode of sketching here recommended (which is as far as I should wish to recommend drawing landscape to those, who draw only for amusement) no great degree of accuracy can be expected. General ideas only must be looked for; not the peculiarities of portrait. It admits the winding river—the shooting promontory—the castle—the abbey—the flat distance—and the mountain melting into the horizon. It admits too the relation, which all these parts bear to each other. But it

descends not to the minutiae of objects. The fringed bank of the river—the Gothic ornaments of the abbey—the chasms, and fractures of the rock, and castle—and every little object along the vale, it pretends not to delineate with exactness. All this is the province of the finished drawing, and the picture; in which the artist conveys an idea of each minute feature of the country he *delineates*, or *imagines*. But *high finishing*, as I have before observed, belongs only to a master, who can give *expressive touches*. The disciple, whom I am instructing, and whom I instruct only from my own experience, must have humbler views; and can hardly expect to please, if he go farther than a sketch, *adorned* as hath been here described.

Many gentlemen, who draw for amusement, employ their leisure on human figures, animal life, portrait, perhaps history. Here and there a man of genius makes some proficiency in these difficult branches of the art: but I have rarely seen any, who do. Distorted faces, and dislocated limbs, I have seen in abundance: and no wonder; for the science of anatomy, *even* as it regards painting, is with difficulty attained; and few who have  
studied

studied it their whole lives, have acquired perfection.

Others again, who draw for amusement, go so far as to handle the pallet. But in this the success of the ill-judging artist seldom answers his hopes; unless utterly void of taste, he happen to be such an artist as may be addressed in the sarcasm of the critic,

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Sine rivali teque, et tua solus amares.

Painting is both a science, and an art; and if so very few attain perfection, who spend a life-time on it, what can be expected from those, who spend only their leisure? The very few gentlemen-artists, who excel in *painting*, scarce afford encouragement for common practice.

But the *art of sketching landscape* is attainable by a man of business; and it is certainly more useful; and, I should imagine, more amusing, to attain *some degree* of excellence in an inferior branch, than to be a mere bungler in a superior. Even if you should not excel in *execution* (which indeed you can hardly expect) you may at least by bringing home the delineation of a fine country, dignify an in-

different sketch. You may please yourself by administering strongly to recollection : and you may please others by conveying your ideas more distinctly in an ordinary sketch, than in the best language.

T H E E N D.

# C O N T E N T S

OF THE FOLLOWING

## P O E M.

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Line

- I **I**NTRODUCTION, and address.
- 26 A close attention to the various scenes of nature recommended; and to the several circumstances, under which they appear.
- 78 A facility also in copying the different *parts* of nature should be attained, before the young artist attempts a *whole*.
- 90 This process will also be a kind of *test*. No one can make any progress, whose imagination is not fired with the scenes of nature.
- 107 On a supposition, that the artist is enamoured with his subject; and is well versed in copying the parts of nature, he begins  
to

to combine, and form those parts into the subjects of landscape. He pays his first attention to *design*, or to the bringing together of such objects, as are suited to his subject; not mixing trivial objects with grand scenes; but preserving the *character* of his subject, whatever it may be.

133 The different parts of his landscape must next be studiously arranged, and put together in a picturesque manner. This is the work of *disposition*; or, as it is sometimes called, *composition*. No rules can be given for this arrangement, but the experience of a nice eye: for tho nature seldom presents a compleat composition, yet we every where see in her works beautiful arrangements of parts; which we ought to study with great attention.

149 In general, a landscape is composed of three parts—a foreground—a middle ground—and a distance.

153 Yet this is not a universal rule. A *balance of parts* however there should always be; tho sometimes those parts may be few.

166 It is a great error in landscape-painters, to lose the *simplicity* of a whole, under the idea of giving *variety*.

172 Some

- 172 Some *particular scene*, therefore, or *leading subject* should always be chosen ; to which the parts should be subservient.
- 195 In balancing a landscape, a spacious foreground will admit a small thread of distance : but the reverse is a bad proportion. In every landscape there *must* be a considerable foreground.
- 206 This theory is illustrated by the view of a *disproportioned distance*.
- 233 An objection answered, why vast distances, tho unsupported by foregrounds, may please *in nature*, and yet offend *in representation*.
- 256 But tho the several parts of landscape may be *well ballanced*, and adjusted ; yet still without *contrast in the parts*, there will be a great deficiency. At the same time this contrast must be easy, and natural.
- 276 Such pictures, as are painted from fancy, are the most pleasing efforts of genius. But if an untoward subject be given, the artist, must endeavour to conceal, and vary the unaccommodating parts. The foreground he *must* claim as his own.
- 298 But if nature be the source of all beauty, it may be objected, that imaginary views can have little merit. The objection has weight, if the imaginary view be not  
formed

formed from the selected parts of nature ;  
but if it be, it is nature still.

312 The artist having thus adjusted his forms, and disposition ; conceives next the best effect of light ; and when he has thus laid the foundation of his picture, proceeds to colouring.

325 The author avoids giving rules for colouring, which are learned chiefly by practice.

331 He just touches on the theory of colours.

352 Artists, with equally good effect, sometimes blend them on their pallet ; and sometimes spread them raw on their canvas.

362 In colouring, the sky gives the ruling tint to the landscape : and the hue of the whole, whether rich, or sober, must be harmonious.

406 A predominancy of shade has the best effect.

439 But light, tho it should not be scattered, should not be collected, as it were, into a focus.

444 The effect of *gradation* illustrated by the colouring of cattle.

463 Of the disposition of light.

488 Of the *general harmony* of the whole.

499 A method proposed of examining a picture with regard to it's *general harmony*.

511 The scientific part being closed, all that can be said with regard to *execution*, is, that, as there are various modes of it, every  
artist

artist ought to adopt his own, or else he becomes a servile imitator. On the whole, the bold free method recommended; which aims at giving the *character* of objects, rather than the *minute detail*.

545 Rules given with regard to figures. History in miniature, introduced in landscape, condemned. Figures should be suited to the scene.

600 Rules to be observed, in the introduction of birds.

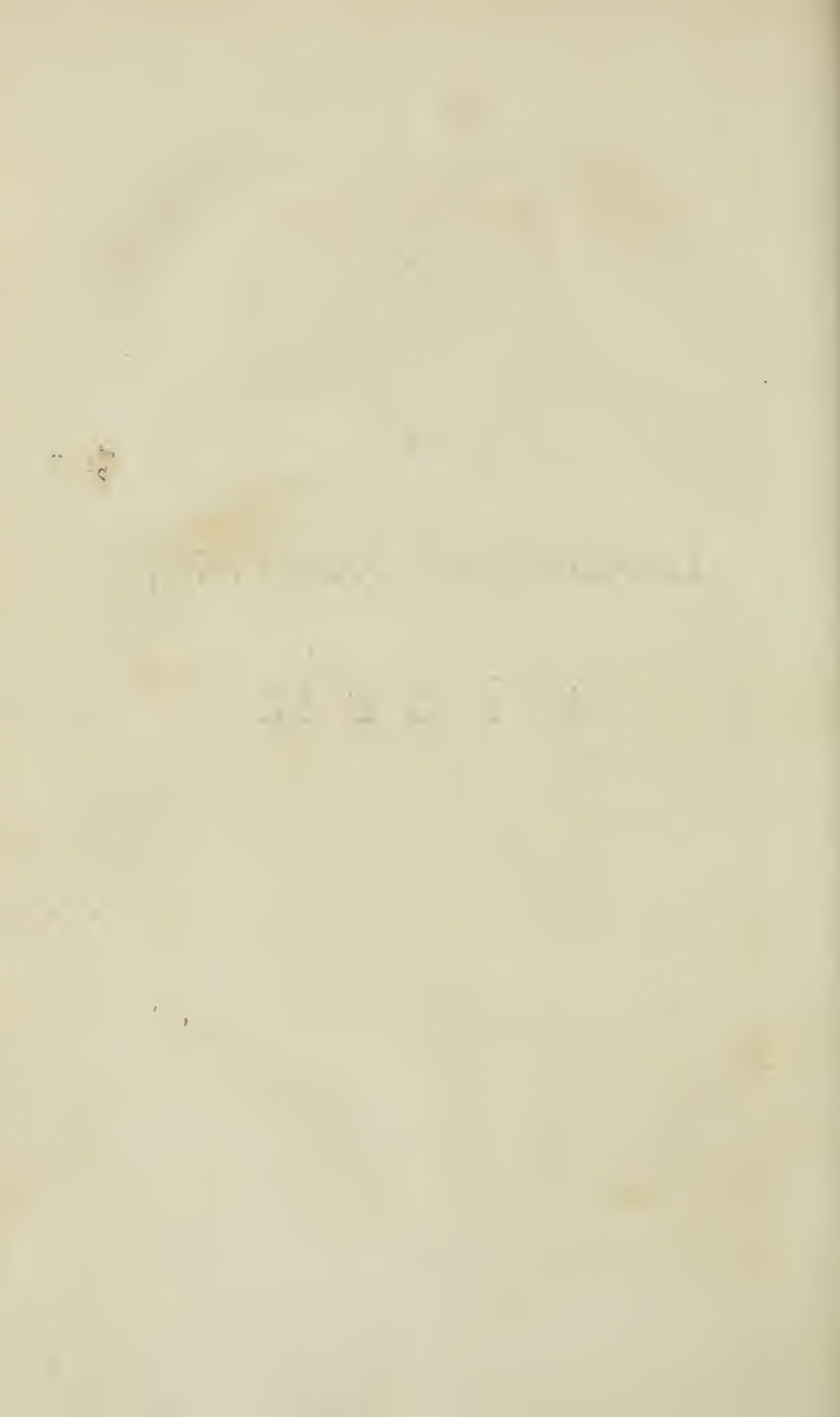
625 An exhibition is the truest test of excellence; where the picture receives it's stamp, and value not from the airs of coxcombs; but from the judgment of men of taste, and science.



ON

LANDSCAPE PAINTING,

A P O E M.



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O N

LANDSCAPE PAINTING.

A P O E M.

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THAT Art, which gives the practis'd pencil pow'r  
To rival Nature's graces ; to combine  
In one harmonious whole her scatter'd charms,  
And o'er them fling appropriate force of light,  
I sing, unskill'd in numbers ; yet a Muse, 5  
Led by the hand of Friendship, deigns to lend  
Her aid, and give that free colloquial flow,  
Which best befits the plain preceptive song.

To thee, thus aided, let me dare to sing,  
Judicious LOCKE ; who from great Nature's realms 10  
Hast cul'd her loveliest features, and arrang'd  
In thy rich mem'ry's storehouse : Thou, whose glance,  
Practis'd in truth and symmetry, can trace  
In every latent touch, each Master's hand,  
Whether the marble by his art subdued 15  
Be soften'd into life, or canvas smooth

A

Be

Be swell'd to animation : Thou, to whom  
 Each mode of landscape, beauteous or sublime,  
 With every various colour, tint, and light,  
 Its nice gradations, and its bold effects, 20  
 Are all familiar, patient hear my song,  
 That to thy taste and science nothing new  
 Presents, yet humbly hopes from thee to gain  
 The plaudit, which, if Nature first approve,  
 Then, and then only, thou wilt deign to yield. 25

First to the youthful artist I address  
 This leading precept : Let not inborn pride,  
 Presuming on thy own inventive powers,  
 Mislead thine eye from Nature. She must reign  
 Great architype in all : Trace then with care 30  
 Her varied walks ; observe how she upheaves  
 The mountain's tow'ring brow ; on its rough sides  
 How broad the shadow falls, what different hues  
 Invest its glimm'ring surface. Next survey  
 The distant lake ; so seen, a shining spot : 35  
 But when approaching nearer, how it flings  
 Its sweeping curves around the shooting cliffs.  
 Mark every shade its Proteus shape assumes  
 From motion and from rest ; and how the forms  
 Of tufted woods, and beetling rocks, and tow'rs 40  
 Of ruin'd castles, from the smooth expanse,  
 Shade answ'ring shade, inverted meet the eye.  
 From mountains hie thee to the forest-scene.  
 Remark the form, the foliage of each tree,  
 And what its leading feature : View the oak ; 45  
 Its massy limbs, its majesty of shade ;

The

The pendent birch ; the beech of many a stem ;  
 The lighter ash ; and all their changeful hues  
 In spring or autumn, russet, green, or grey.

Next wander by the river's mazy bank : 50  
 See where it dimpling glides ; or briskly where  
 Its whirling eddies sparkle round the rock ;  
 Or where, with headlong rage, it dashes down  
 Some fractur'd chasm, till all its fury spent,  
 It sinks to sleep, a silent stagnant pool, 55  
 Dark, tho' translucent, from the mantling shade.

Now give thy view more ample range : explore  
 The vast expanse of ocean ; see, when calm,  
 What Iris-hues of purple, green, and gold,  
 Play on its glassy surface ; and when vexed 60  
 With storms, what depth of billowy shade, with light  
 Of curling foam contrasted. View the cliffs ;  
 The lonely beacon, and the distant coast,  
 In mists array'd, just heaving into sight  
 Above the dim horizon ; where the sail 65  
 Appears conspicuous in the lengthen'd gleam.

With studious eye examine next the arch  
 Etherial ; mark each floating cloud ; its form,  
 Its varied colour ; and what mass of shade  
 It gives the scene below, pregnant with change 70  
 Perpetual, from the morning's purple dawn,  
 Till the last glimm'ring ray of russet eve.  
 Mark how the sun-beam, steep'd in morning-dew,  
 Beneath each jutting promontory flings  
 A darker shade ; while brighten'd with the ray 75  
 Of sultry noon, not yet entirely quench'd,  
 The evening-shadow less opaquely falls.

Thus stor'd with fair ideas, call them forth  
 By practice, till thy ready pencil trace  
 Each form familiar : but attempt not thou 80  
 A *whole*, till every *part* be well conceived.  
 The tongue that awes a senate with its force,  
 Once lifp'd in syllables, or e'er it pour'd  
 Its glowing periods, warm with patriot-fire.

At length matur'd, stand forth for honest Fame 85  
 A candidate. Some noble theme select  
 From Nature's choicest scenes; and sketch that theme  
 With firm, but easy line ; then if my song  
 Assist thy pow'r, it asks no nobler meed.

Yet if, when Nature's sov'reign glories meet 90  
 Thy sudden glance, no corresponding spark  
 Of vivid flame be kindled in thy breast ;  
 If calmly thou canst view them ; know for thee  
 My numbers flow not : seek some fitter guide  
 To lead thee, where the low mechanic toils 95  
 With patient labour for his daily hire.

But if true Genius fire thee, if thy heart  
 Glow, palpitate with transport, at the sight ;  
 If emulation seize thee, to transfuse  
 These splendid visions on thy vivid chart ; 100  
 — If the big thought seem more than Art can paint,  
 Hasten, snatch thy pencil, bounteous Nature yields  
 To thee her choicest stores ; and the glad Muse  
 Sits by assistant, aiming but to fan  
 The Promethèan flame, conscious her rules 105  
 Can only guide, not give, the warmth divine.

First learn with *objects suited to each scene*  
 Thy landscape to adorn. If some rude view  
 Thy pencil culls, of lake, or mountain range,  
 Where Nature walks with proud majestic step, 110  
 Give not her robe the formal folds of art,  
 But bid it flow with ample dignity.

Mix not the mean and trivial: Is the *whole*  
 Sublime, let each accordant *part* be grand.

Yet if thro' dire necessity (for that 115  
 Alone should force the deed) some polish'd scene  
 Employ thy pallet, dress'd by human art,  
 The lawn so level, and the bank so trim,  
 Yet still *preserve thy subject*. Let the oak  
 Be elegant of form, that mantles o'er 120  
 Thy shaven fore-ground: The rough forester  
 Whose peel'd and wither'd boughs, and knarled trunk,  
 Have stood the rage of many a winter's blast,  
 Might ill such cultur'd scenes adorn. Not less  
 Would an old Briton, rough with martial scars, 125  
 And bearing stern defiance on his brow,  
 Seem fitly stationed at a Gallic feast.

This choice of *objects suited to the scene*,  
 We name DESIGN: A choice not more requir'd  
 From RAFFAEL, than from thee; whether his hand 130  
 Give all but motion to some group divine,  
 Or thine inglorious picture woods and streams.

With equal rigour DISPOSITION claims  
 Thy close attention. Would'st thou learn its laws,  
 Examine Nature, when combin'd with art, 135  
 Or simple; mark how various are her forms,

Mountains

Mountains enormous, rugged rocks, clear lakes,  
 Castles, and bridges, aqueducts and fanes.  
 Of these observe, how some, united please;  
 While others, ill-combin'd, disgust the eye. 140  
 That principle, which rules these various parts,  
 And harmonizing *all*, produces *one*,  
 Is *Disposition*. By its plastic pow'r  
 Those rough materials, which *Design* selects,  
 Are nicely balanc'd. Thus with friendly aid 145  
 These principles unite: *Design* presents  
 The gen'ral subject; *Disposition* culls,  
 And recombines, the various forms anew.

— Yet here true Taste to three distinguish'd parts  
 Confines her aim: Brought nearest to the eye 150  
 She forms her foregrounds; then the midway space;  
 E'er the blue distance melt in liquid air.

But tho' full oft these parts with blending tints  
 Are soften'd so, as wakes a frequent doubt  
 Where each begins, where ends; yet still she keeps 155  
 A *gen'ral balance*. So when Europe's sons  
 Sound the alarm of war; some potent hand  
 (Now thine again my Albion) poises true  
 The scale of empire; curbs each rival pow'r;  
 And checks each lawless tyrant's wild career. 160

Not but there are of fewer parts who plan  
 A pleasing picture. These a forest-glade  
 Suffices oft; behind which, just remov'd,  
 One tuft of foliage, WATERLOO, like thine,  
 Gives all we wish of dear variety. 165  
 For

For ev'n variety itself may pall,  
 If to the eye, when pausing with delight  
 On one fair object, it presents a mass  
 Of many, which disturb that eye's repose.  
 All hail Simplicity! To thy chaste shrine, 170  
 Beyond all other, let the artist bow.

Oft have I seen arrang'd, by hands that well  
 — Could pencil Nature's *parts*, landscapes, that knew  
 No *leading subject* : Here a forest rose ;  
 A river there ran dimpling ; and beyond, 175  
 The portion of a lake : while rocks, and tow'rs,  
 And castles intermix'd, spread o'er the whole  
 In multiform confusion. Ancient dames  
 Thus oft compose of various filken shreds,  
 Some gaudy, patch'd, unmeaning, tawdry thing ; 180  
 Where bucks and cherries, ships and flow'rs, unite  
 In one rich compound of absurdity.

Chuse then some *principal commanding theme*,  
 Be it lake, valley, winding stream, cascade,  
 Castle, or sea-port, and on *that* exhaust 185  
 Thy pow'rs, and make to that all else conform.

Who paints a landscape, is confin'd by rules,  
 As fix'd and rigid as the tragic bard,  
 To *unity of subject*. Is the scene  
 — A forest, nothing there, save woods and lawns 190  
 Must rise conspicuous. Episodes of hills  
 And lakes be far remov'd ; all that obtrudes  
 On the chief theme, how beautiful soe'er  
 Seen as a *part*, disgusts us in the *whole*.

Thus in the realms of landscape, to preserve 195  
*Proportion* just is *Disposition's* task.

And

— And tho' a glance of distance it allows,  
 Ev'n when the foreground swells upon the sight;  
 Yet if the distant scen'ry wide extend,  
 The foreground must be ample: Take free scope: 200  
 Art must have space to stand on, like the Sage,  
 Who boasted pow'r to shake the solid globe.  
 This thou must claim; and, if thy distance spread  
 Profuse, must claim it amply: Uncombin'd  
 With foreground, distance loses pow'r to please. 205

Where rising from the solid rock, appear  
 Those ancient battlements, there liv'd a knight,  
 That oft surveying from his castle wall  
 The wide expanse before him; distance vast;  
 Interminable wilds; savannahs deep; 210  
 Dark woods; and village spires, and glitt'ring streams,  
 Just twinkling in the sun-beam, wish'd the view  
 Transferr'd to canvass, and for that sage end,  
 Led some obedient son of Art to where  
 His own unerring taste had previous fix'd 215  
 The point of amplest prospect. "Take thy stand  
 "Just here," he cry'd, "and paint me *all* thou seest,  
 "Omit no single object." It was done;  
 And soon the live-long landscape cloaths his hall,  
 And spreads from base to ceiling. *All* was there; 220  
 As to his guests, while dinner cool'd, the knight  
 Full oft would prove; and with uplifted cane  
 Point to the distant spire, where slept entomb'd  
 His ancestry; beyond, where lay the town,  
 Skirted with wood, that gave him place and voice 225  
 In Britain's senate; nor untrac'd the stream  
 That fed the goodly trout they soon should taste;

Nor

Nor ev'ry scatter'd feat of friend, or foe,  
 He calls his neighbours. Heedless he, meanwhile,  
 That what he deems the triumph of his taste, 230  
 Is but a painted survey, a mere map ;  
 Which light and shade and perspective misplac'd  
 But serve to spoil.

Yet why (methinks I hear  
 Some Critic say) do ample scenes like this  
 In *picture* fail to please ; when ev'ry eye 235  
 Confesses they transport on *Nature's chart* ?

Why, but because, where she displays the scene,  
 The roving sight can pause, and swift select,  
 From all she offers, parts, whereon to fix,  
 And form distinct perceptions ; each of these 240  
 Producing *sep'rate pictures* ; and as bees  
 Condense within their hives the varying sweets ;  
 So does the eye a *lovely whole* collect  
 From *parts disjointed* ; nay, perhaps, *deform'd*.  
 Then deem not Art defective, which divides, 245  
 Rejects, or recombines : but rather say,  
 'Tis her chief excellence. There is, we know,  
 A charm unspeakable in converse free  
 Of lover, or of friend, when soul with soul  
 Mixes in social intercourse ; when choice 250  
 Of phrase, and rules of rhet'ric are disdain'd ;  
 Yet say, adopted by the tragic bard,  
 If Jassier thus with Belvidera talk'd,  
 So vague, so rudely, would not want of skill,  
 Selection, and arrangement, damn the scene ? 255

Thy forms, tho' *balanc'd*, still perchance may want

B

The

The charm of *Contrast*: Sing we then its pow'r.  
 'Tis Beauty's surest source; it regulates  
 Shape, colour, light, and shade; forms ev'ry line  
 By *opposition just*; whate'er is *rough* 260  
 With skill delusive counteracts by *smooth*;  
*Sinuuous*, or *concave*, by its opposite;  
 Yet ever *covertly*: should *Art appear*,  
 That art were *Affectation*. Then alone  
 We own the power of *Contrast*, when the lines 265  
 Unite with Nature's freedom: then alone,  
 When from its careless touch each part receives  
 A pleasing form. The lake's contracted bounds  
 By contrast varied, elegantly flow;  
 Th' unwieldy mountain sinks; here, to remove 270  
 Offensive parallels, the hill deprest  
 Is lifted; there the heavy beech expung'd  
 Gives place to airy pines; if two bare knolls  
 Rise to the right and left, a castle here,  
 And there a wood, diversify their form. 275

Thrice happy he, who always can indulge  
 This pleasing feast of fancy; who, replete  
 With rich ideas, can arrange their charms  
 As his own genius prompts, and plan and paint  
 A novel whole. But tasteless wealth oft claims 280  
 The *faithful portrait*, and will fix the scene  
 Where Nature's lines run falsely, or refuse  
 To harmonize. Artist, if thus employ'd,  
 I pity thy mischance. Yet there are means  
 Ev'n here to hide defects: The human form, 285  
Pourtray'd

Pourtray'd by Reynolds, oft abounds with grace  
 He saw not in his model; which nor hurts  
 Resemblance, nor fictitious skill betrays.  
 Why then, if o'er the limb uncouth he flings  
 The flowing vest, may not thy honest art 290  
 Veil with the foliage of some spreading tree,  
 Unpleasing objects, or remote, or near?  
 An ample licence for such needful change,  
 The foregrounds giveth thee: There both mend and make.  
 Whoe'er opposes, tell them, 'tis the spot 295  
 Where fancy needs must sport; where, if restrain'd  
 To close resemblance, thy best art expires.

What if they plead, that from thy gen'ral rule,  
 That rests on Nature as the only source  
 Of beauty, thou revolt'st; tell them that rule 300  
 Thou hold'st still sacred: Nature *is* its source;  
 Yet Nature's *parts* fail to receive alike  
 The fair impression. View her varied range:  
 Each form that charms is there; yet her best forms  
 Must be *selected*: As the sculptur'd charms 305  
 Of the fam'd Venus grew, so must thou cull  
 From various scenes such parts as best create  
 One perfect whole. If Nature ne'er array'd  
 Her most accomplish'd work with grace compleat,  
 Think, will she waste on desert rocks, and dells, 310  
 What she denies to Woman's charming form?

And now, if on review thy chalk'd *design*,  
 Brought into form by *Disposition's* aid,  
 — Displease not, trace thy lines with pencil free;  
 Add lightly too that *general mass* of shade, 315

Which suits the form and fashion of its parts.  
 There are who, studious of the best effects,  
 — First sketch a slight cartoon : Such previous care  
 Is needful, where the Artist's fancy fails  
 Precisely to foresee the future whole. 320

This done, prepare thy pallet, mix thy tints,  
 And call on chaste Simplicity again  
 To save her votary from whate'er of hue,  
 Discordant or abrupt, may flaunt or glare.

Yet here to bring materials from the mine, 325  
 From animal, or vegetable dies,  
 And sing their various properties and pow'rs,  
 The Muse descends not. To mechanic rules,  
 To prose, and practice, which can only teach  
 The use of pigments, she resigns the toil. 330

One truth she gives, that Nature's simple loom  
 Weaves but with three distinct, or mingled, hues,  
 The vest that cloaths Creation : These are red,  
 Azure, and yellow. Pure and unstain'd white  
 (If colour deem'd) rejects her gen'ral law, 335  
 — And is by her rejected. Dost thou deem  
 The glossy surface of yon heifer's coat  
 A perfect white ? Or yon vast heaving cloud  
 That climbs the distant hill ? With ceruse bright  
 Attempt to catch its tint, and thou wilt fail. 340  
 Some tinge of purple, or some yellowish brown,  
 Must first be blended, e'er thy toil succeed.  
 Pure white, great Nature wishes to expunge

From

From all her works ; and only then admits,  
 When with her mantle broad of fleecy snow 345  
 She wraps them, to secure from chilling frost ;  
 Conscious, mean while, that what she gives to guard,  
 Conceals their ev'ry charm ; the stole of night  
 Not more eclipses : yet that fable stole  
 May, by the skilful mixture of these hues, 350  
 Be shadow'd ev'n to dark Cimmerian gloom.

Draw then from these, as from three plenteous springs,  
 Thy brown, thy purple, crimson, orange, green,  
 Nor load thy pallet with a useless tribe  
 Of pigments, when commix'd with needful white, 355  
 As suits thy end, these native three suffice.  
 But if thou dost, still cautious keep in view  
 — That harmony which these alone can give.  
 Yet still there are, who scorning all the rules  
 Of dull mechanic art, with random hand 360  
 — Fling their unblended colours, and produce  
 Bolder effects by opposition's aid.

The Sky, whate'er its hue, to landscape gives  
 A correspondent tinge. The morning ray  
 Spreads it with purple light, in dew-drops steep'd ; 365  
 The evening fires it with a crimson glow.  
 Blows the bleak North ? It sheds a cold, blue tint  
 On all it touches. Do light mists prevail ?  
 A soft grey hue o'erspreads the gen'ral scene, 370  
 And makes that scene, like beauty view'd thro' gauze,  
 More delicately lovely. Chuse thy sky ;  
 But let that sky, whate'er the tint it takes,

O'er-

O'er-rule thy pallet. Frequent have I seen,  
 In landscapes well compos'd, aerial hues  
 So ill-preserv'd, that whether cold or heat, 375  
 Tempest or calm, prevail'd, was dubious all.  
 Not so thy pencil, CLAUDE, the season marks:  
 Thou mak'st us pant beneath thy summer noon;  
 And shiver in thy cool autumnal eve.

Such are the pow'rs of sky; and therefore Art 380  
 Selects what best is suited to the scenes  
 It means to form: to this adapts a morn,  
 To that an ev'ning ray. Light mists full oft  
 Give mountain-views an added dignity,  
 While tame impoverish'd scenery claims the force 385  
 Of splendid lights and shades; nor claims in vain.

Thy sky adjusted, all that is *remote*  
 First colour faintly: leaving to the last  
 Thy foreground. Easier'tis, thou know'st, to spread  
 Thy floating foliage o'er the sky; than mix 390  
 That sky amid the branches. Venture still  
 On warmer tints, as distances approach  
 Nearer the eye: nor fear the richest hues,  
 If to those hues thou giv'st the meet support  
 Of strong opposing shade. A canvas once 395  
 I saw, on which the Artist dar'd to paint  
 A scene in Indostan; where gold, and pearl  
 Barbaric, flam'd on many a broider'd vest  
 Profusely splendid: yet chaste Art was there,  
 Opposing hue to hue; each shadow deep 400  
 So spread, that all with sweet accord produc'd  
 A bright, yet modest whole. Thus blend thy tints,  
 Be

Be they of scarlet, orange, green, or gold,  
 Harmonious, till one gen'ral glow prevail  
 Unbroken by abrupt and hostile glare. 405

— Let shade predominate, it makes each light  
 More lucid, yet destroys offensive glare.  
 Mark when in fleecy show'rs of snow, the clouds  
 Seem to descend, and whiten o'er the land,  
 What unsubstantial unity of tinge 410  
 Involves each prospect: Vision is absorb'd;  
 Or, wand'ring thro' the void, finds not a point  
 To rest on: All is mockery to the eye.  
 Thus light diffus'd, debases that effect  
 Which shade improves. Behold what glorious scenes 415  
 Arise thro' Nature's works from shade. Yon lake  
 With all its circumambient woods, far less  
 Would charm the eye, did not the dusky mist  
 Creeping along its eastern shores, ascend  
 Those tow'ring cliffs, mix with the ruddy beam 420  
 Of opening day, just damp its fires, and spread  
 O'er all the scene a sweet obscurity.

But would'st thou see the full effect of shade  
 Well mass'd, at eve mark that upheaving cloud,  
 Which charg'd with all th' artillery of Jove, 425  
 In awful darkness, marching from the east,  
 Ascends; see how it blots the sky, and spreads,  
 Darker, and darker still, its dusky veil,  
 Till from the east to west, the cope of heav'n  
 It curtains closely round. Haply thou stand'st 430  
 Expectant of the loud convulsive burst,

When

When lo ! the sun, just sinking in the west,  
 Pours from th' horizon's verge a splendid ray,  
 Which tenfold grandeur to the darkness adds.  
 Far to the east the radiance shoots, just tips 435  
 Those tufted groves ; but all its splendour pours  
 On yonder castled cliff, which chiefly owes  
 Its glory, and supreme effect, to shade.

Thus light, inforc'd by shadow, spreads a ray  
 Still brighter. Yet forbid that light to shine 440  
 A glitt'ring speck ; for this were to illumine  
 Thy picture, as the convex glass collects,  
 — All to one dazzling point, the solar rays.

Whate'er the force of *opposition*, still  
 In soft *gradation* equal beauty lies. 445  
 When the mild lustre glides from light to dark,  
 — The eye well-pleas'd pursues it. 'Mid the herds  
 Of variegated hue, that graze our lawns,  
 Oft may the Artist trace examples just  
 Of this sedate effect, and oft remark 450  
 Its opposite. Behold yon lordly Bull,  
 His fable head, his lighter shoulders ting'd  
 With flakes of brown ; at length still lighter tints  
 Prevailing, graduate o'er his flank and loins  
 In tawny orange. What, if on his front 455  
 A star of white appear ? The general mass  
 Of colour spreads unbroken ; and the mark  
 Gives his stern front peculiar character.

Ah ! how degenerate from her well-cloath'd fire  
 That heifer. See her sides with white and black 460  
 So

So studded, so distinct, each jostling each,  
The groundwork-colour hardly can be known.

Of lights, if more than two thy landscape boast,  
It boasts too much : But if two lights be there,  
Give one pre-eminence : with that be sure 465  
Illumine thy *foreground*, or thy *midway space* ;  
= But rarely spread it on the *distant scene*.

Yet there, if level plains, or fens appear,  
And meet the sky, a lengthen'd gleam of light  
Discreetly thrown, will vary the flat scene. 470

But if that distance be abruptly clos'd  
By mountains, cast them into total shade :  
Ill suit gay robes their hoary majesty.  
Sober be all their hues ; except, perchance,  
Approaching nearer in the midway space, 475  
One of the giant-brethren tow'r sublime.  
To him thy art may aptly give a gleam  
Of radiance : 'twill besit his awful head,  
Alike, when rising thro' the morning-dews  
In misty dignity, the pale, wan ray, 480  
Invests him ; or when, beaming from the west,  
= A fiercer splendour opens to our view  
All his terrific features, rugged cliffs,  
Andyawning chasms, which vapours thro' the day  
Had veil'd ; dens where the Lynx or Pard might dwell  
In noon-tide safety, meditating there 486  
His next nocturnal ravage thro' the land.

Are now thy lights and shades adjusted all ?  
Yet pause : perhaps the perspective is just ;

C

Perhaps

Perhaps each local hue is duly plac'd; 490  
 Perhaps the light offends not; harmony  
 May still be wanting, that which forms a whole  
 From colour, shade, gradation, is not yet  
 Obtain'd. Avails it ought, in civil life,  
 If here and there a family unite 495  
 In bonds of peace, while discord rends the land,  
 And pale-ey'd Faction, with her garment dipp'd  
 In blood, excites her guilty sons to war?

To aid thine eye, distrustful if this end  
 Be fully gain'd, wait for the twilight hour : 500  
 When the grey owl, sailing on lazy wing,  
 Her circuit takes; when length'ning shades dissolve;  
 Then in some corner place thy finish'd piece,  
 Free from each garish ray: Thine eye will there  
 Be undisturb'd by *parts*; there will the *whole* 505  
 Be view'd collectively; the distance there  
 Will from its foreground pleasingly retire,  
 As distance ought, with true decreasing tone.  
 If not, if shade or light be out of place,  
 Thou see'st the error, and may'st yet amend. 510

Here science ceases, tho' to close the theme,  
 One labour still, and of Herculean cast,  
 Remains unfulg'd, the art to *execute*,  
 And what its happiest mode. In this, alas!  
 What numbers fail; tho' paths, as various, lead 515  
 To that fair end, as to thy ample walls  
 Imperial London. Every Artist takes

His

His own peculiar manner ; save the hand  
 Coward, and cold, that dare not leave the track  
 Its master taught. Thou who would'st boldy seize 520  
 Superior excellence, observe, with care,  
 The style of ev'ry Artift ; yet disdain  
 To mimic ev'n the best : Enough for thee  
 To gain a knowledge from what various modes  
 The same effect results. Artists there are, 525  
 Who, with exactness painful to behold,  
 Labour each leaf, and each minuter moss,  
 Till with enamell'd surface all appears  
 — Compleatly smooth. Others with bolder hand,  
 By Genius guided, mark the gen'ral form, 530  
 The leading features, which the eye of Taste,  
 Practis'd in Nature, readily translates.  
 Here lies the point of excellence. A piece,  
 Thus finish'd, tho' perhaps the playful toil  
 Of three short mornings, more enchants the eye, 535  
 Than what was labour'd thro' as many moons.  
 Why then such toil mispent ? We do not mean,  
 With close and microscopic eye, to pore  
 On ev'ry studied *part* : The practis'd judge  
 Looks chiefly on the *whole* ; and if thy hand 540  
 Be guided by true Science, it is sure  
 To guide thy pencil freely. Scorn thou then  
 On *parts minute* to dwell : The *character*  
 Of objects aim at, not the *nice detail*.

Now is the scene compleat : with Nature's ease, 545  
 Thy woods, and lawns, and rocks, and splendid lakes,

And distant hills unite ; it but remains  
*To people these fair regions.* Some for this  
 Consult the sacred page ; and in a nook  
 Obscure, present the Patriarch's test of faith, 550  
 The little altar, and the victim son :  
 Or haply, to adorn some vacant sky,  
 Load it with forms, that fabling Bard supplies  
 Who sang of bodies chang'd ; the headlong steeds,  
 The car upheav'd, of Phaeton, while he, 555  
 Rash boy ! spreads on the plain his pallid corse,  
 His sisters weeping round him. Groups like these  
 Besit not landscape : Say, does Abraham there  
 Ought that some idle peasant might not do ?  
 Is there expression, passion, character, 560  
 To mark the Patriarch's fortitude and faith ?  
 The scanty space which perspective allows,  
 — Forbids. Why then degrade his dignity  
 By paltry miniature ? Why make the seer  
 A mere appendage ? Rather deck thy scene 565  
 With figures simply suited to its style.  
 The *landscape* is thy object ; and to that,  
 Be these the *under-parts*. Yet still observe  
 Propriety in all. The speckled Pard,  
 Or tawny Lion, ill would glare beneath 570  
 The British oak ; and British flocks and herds  
 Would graze as ill on Afric's burning sands.  
 If rocky, wild, and awful, be thy views,  
 Low arts of husbandry exclude : The spade,  
 The plough, the patient angler with his rod, 575  
 Be banish'd thence ; far other guests invite,

Wild

Wild as those scenes themselves, banditti fierce,  
 And gipsy-tribes, not merely to adorn,  
 But to impress that sentiment more strong,  
 Awak'd already by the savage-scene. 580

— Oft winding slowly up the forest glade,  
 The ox-team lab'ring, drags the future keel  
 Of some high admiral : no ornament  
 Assists the woodland scene like this ; while far  
 Remov'd, seen by a gleam among the trees, 585  
 The forest-herd in various groups repose.

Yet, if thy skill should fail to people well  
 Thy landscape, leave it desert. Think how CLAUDE  
 Oft crowded scenes, which Nature's self might own,  
 With forms ill-drawn, ill-chosen, ill-arrang'd, 590  
 Of man and beast, o'er loading with false taste  
 His sylvan glories. Seize them, Pestilence,  
 And sweep them far from our disgusted sight.

If, o'er thy canvas Ocean pours his tide,  
 — The full siz'd vessel, with its swelling sail, 595  
 Be cautious to admit ; unless thy art  
 Can give it cordage, pennants, masts, and form  
 Appropriate ; rather with a careless touch  
 Of light, or shade, just mark the distant skiff.

Nor thou refuse that ornamental aid, 600  
 The feather'd race afford. When flutt'ring near  
 The eye, we own absurdity results,  
 — They seem both fix'd and moving : but behold  
 At proper distance, they will fill thy sky  
 With animation : Give them there free scope 605  
 Their pinions in the blue serene to ply.

Far

Far up yon river, opening to the sea,  
 Just where the distant coast extends a curve,  
 A lengthen'd train of sea-fowl urge their flight.  
 Observe their files! In what exact array 610  
 The dark battalion floats, distinctly seen  
 Before yon silver cliff! Now, now, they reach  
 That lonely beacon; now are lost again  
 In yon dark cloud. How pleasing is the sight!  
 The forest-glade from its wild, tim'rous herd, 615  
 Receives not richer ornament, than here  
 From birds this lonely sea-view. Ruins too  
 Are grac'd by such additions: not the force  
 Of strong and catching lights adorn them more,  
 Than do the dusky tribes of rooks, and daws, 620  
 Flutt'ring their broken battlements among.  
 Place but these feather'd groups at distance due;  
 The eye, by fancy aided, sees them move;  
 Flit past the cliff, or circle round the tow'r.

Thy landscape finish'd, tho' it meet thy own 625  
 Approving judgment, still requires a test,  
 More general, more decisive. Thine's an eye  
 Too partial to be trusted. Let it hang  
 On the rich wall, which emulation fills;  
 Where rival masters court the world's applause. 630  
 There travell'd virtuosi, strolling round,  
 With strut important, peering thro' the hand,  
 Hollow'd in telescopic form, survey  
 Each luckless piece, and uniformly damn;  
 Assuming for their own the taste they steal. 635

“ This

- “ This has not *Guido's* air:” “ This poorly apes  
 “ *Titian's* rich colouring:” “ *Rembrant's* forms are here,  
 “ But not his light and shadow.” Skilful they
- In ev'ry hand, save Nature's. What if these  
 With *Gaspar* or with *Claude* thy work compare, 640  
 And therefore scorn it; let the pedants prate  
 Unheeded. But if taste, correct and pure,  
 Grounded on practice; or, what more avails  
 Than practice, observation justly form'd  
 On Nature's best examples and effects, 645  
 Approve thy landscape; if judicious LOCKE  
 See not an error he would wish remov'd,  
 Then boldly deem thyself the heir of Fame.



# N O T E S

ON THE FOREGOING

## P O E M.

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Line

34 **S**OME perhaps may object to the word *glimmering* : but whoever has observed the playing lights, and colours, which often invest the summits of mountains, will not think the epithet improper.

45 *What it's leading feature* ; that is, the *particular character* of the tree. The different shape of the leaves, and the different mode of spreading it's branches, give every tree, a *distinct form*, or *character*. At a little distance you easily distinguish the oak from the ash ; and the ash from the beech. It is this *general form*, not any *particular detail*, which the artist is instructed to get by heart. The same remark holds with

D regard

regard to other parts of nature. These *general forms* may be called the *painter's alphabet*. By these he learns to read her works; and also to make them intelligible to others.

61 *With light of curling foam contrasted.* The progress of each wave is this. Beneath the frothy curl, when it rises between the eye, and the light, the colour is pale green, which brightens from the base towards the summit. When a wave subsides, the summit falling into the base, extends, and raises it; and the sides running off from the centre, that part of the water which meets the succeeding wave, springs upward from the shock; the top forms into foam, and rolling over falls down the side, which has been shocked; presenting if the water be much agitated, the idea of a cascade.

77 *The evening-shadow less opaquely falls.* It is not often observed by landscape-painters, tho it certainly deserves observation, that the morning-shadows are darker than those of the evening.

101 *If the big thought seem more than art can paint.* It is always a sign of genius to be dissatisfied with our own efforts; and to conceive more than we can express.

146 *Design presents the general subject, disposition, &c.* Some writers on the art of painting have varied this division. But it seems most proper, I think, to give the selection of the elements of landscape—the assembling of rocks, mountains, cataracts, and other objects to *design*: while *disposition* is properly employed in the local arrangement of them.

149 The *general* composition of a landscape consists of three parts—the foreground—the second ground—and the distance. No rule can be given for proportioning these parts to each other. There are ten thousand beautiful proportions; from which the eye of taste must select a good one. The foreground must always be considerable—in some cases, ample. It is the very basis, and foundation of the whole.—Nor is it a bad rule, I think, that some part of the foreground should be the highest part of the picture. In rocky, and mountainous views this is easy, and has generally a good effect. And sometimes even when a country is more level, a tree on the foreground, carried higher than the rest of the landscape, answers the end. At the same time in many species of landscape this

rule cannot easily be adapted: nor is it by any means essential.

164 *Waterlo, like thine.* The subjects of this master seldom went beyond some little forest-view. He has etched a great number of prints in this stile of landscape; which for the beauty of the trees in particular, are much admired.

173 *Landscapes, that knew no leading subject.* There is not a rule in landscape-painting more neglected; or that ought more to be observed, than what relates to a *leading-subject*. By the leading subject, we mean, what *characterizes the scene*. We often see a landscape, which comes under no denomination. Is it the scenery about a ruin? Is it a lake-scene? Is it a river-scene? No: but it is a jumble of all together. Some leading subject therefore is required in every landscape, which forms it's character; and to which the painter

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is confined by rules,  
As fixed, and rigid as the tragic bard.

when the landscape takes it's character from a ruin, or other object on the foreground, the *distance* introduced, is merely an appendage; and must plainly appear to be an under-part; not interfering with the  
subject

subject of the piece. But most commonly the scene, or leading-subject of the picture, occupies the middle distance. In this case, the *foreground* becomes the appendage; and without any striking object to attract the eye, must plainly shew, that it is intended only to introduce the leading-subject with more advantage.

190 Thus, in a forest-scene, the woods and lawns are the leading-subject. If the piece will admit it, a hill, or a lake, may be admitted in *remote distance*: but they must be introduced, only as the episodes in a poem, to set off the main subject. They must not interfere with it; but be *far removed*.

197 *And tho a glance.* It is certain, in fact, that a considerable foreground, with a glance of distance, will make a better picture, than a wide distance, set off only with a meagre foreground: and yet I doubt whether an adequate reason can be given; unless it be founded on what hath already been advanced, that we consider the foreground as the *basis, and foundation of the whole picture*. So that if it is not considerable in all circumstances, and extensive in some, there seems a defect.

280 *A novel whole.* The imaginary-view, formed on a judicious selection, and arrangement of the parts of nature, has a better chance of making a good picture, than a view taken in the whole from any natural scene. Not only the lines, and objects of the natural scene rarely admit a happy composition; but the *character* of it is seldom throughout preserved. Whether it be *sublime*, or *beautiful*, there is generally something mixed with it of a nature unsuitable to it. All this the exhibition of fancy rectifies, when in the hands of a master. Nor does he claim any thing, but what the poet, and he are equally allowed. Where is the story in real life, on which the poet can form either an epic, or a drama, unless heightened by his imagination? At the same time he must take care, that all his imaginary additions are founded in nature, or his work will disgust. Such also must be the painter's care. But under this restriction, he certainly may bring together a more *consistent whole*, culled from the *various parts* of nature, than nature herself exhibits in *any one scene*.

314 *Trace thy lines with pencil free.* The master is discovered even in his chalk, or black-lead lines—so free, firm, and intelligent.  
We

We often admire these first, rude touches. The story of the two old masters will be remembred, who left cards of compliments to each other, on which only the simple outline of a figure was drawn by one, and corrected by the other; but with such a superior elegance in each, that the signature of names could not have marked them more decisively.

318 *First sketch a slight cartoon.* It is the practice indeed of the generality of painters, when they have any great design to execute, to make a slight sketch, sometimes on paper, and sometimes on canvas. And these sketches are often greatly superior to the principal picture, which has been laboured, and finished with the exactest care. King William on horse-back at Hampton court, by sir Godfrey Kneller, is a striking example of this remark. The picture is highly finished; but is a tame, and unmasterly performance. At Houghton-hall I have seen the original sketch of this picture; which I should have valued, not only greatly beyond the picture itself, but beyond any thing I ever saw from the pencil of sir Godfrey.

331 *One truth she gives, &c.* From these three virgin colours, *red, blue, and yellow*, all the tints of nature are composed. Greens

of various hues, are composed of blue, and yellow : orange, of red, and yellow : purple and violet, of red, and blue. The tints of the rainbow seem to be composed also of these colours. They lie in order thus : violet—*red*—orange—*yellow*—green—*blue*—violet—*red* : in which assortment we observe that orange comes between *red*, and *yellow* ; that is, it is composed of those colours melting into each other. Green is in the same way composed of *yellow* and *blue* ; and violet, or purple of *blue*, and *red*.——Nay even browns of all kinds may, in a degree, be effected by a mixture of these original colours : so may grey ; and even a kind of black, tho not a perfect one.——As all pigments however are deficient, and cannot approach the rainbow colours, which are the purest we know, the painter must often, even in his splendid tints, call in different reds, blues, and yellows. Thus as vermilion, tho an excellent red on many occasions, cannot give the rosy, crimson hue, he must often call in lake. Nor will he find any yellow, or blue, that will answer every purpose. In the tribe of browns he will be still more at a loss ; and must have recourse to different earths.—In oil-painting one of the finest earths is known,  
at

at the colour-shops, by the name of *castle-earth*, or *Vandyke's-brown*; as it is supposed to have been used by that master.

336 *And is by her rejected.* Scarce any natural object, but snow, is purely white. The chalk-cliff is generally in a degree discoloured. The petals of the snow-drop indeed, and of some other flowers, are purely white: but seldom any of the larger parts of nature.

358 *Keep in view that harmony, &c.* Tho it will be necessary to use other colours, besides *yellow*, *red*, and *blue*, this union should however still be kept in view, as the leading principle of harmony. A mixture indeed of these three will produce nearly the colour you want: but the more colours are mixed, the muddier they grow. It will give more clearness therefore, and brightness to your colouring, to use simple pigments, of which there are great abundance in the painter's dispensatory.

361 This mode of colouring is the most difficult to attain, as it is the most scientific. It includes a perfect knowledge of the effects of colours in all their various agreements, and oppositions. When attained, it is the most easy in practice. The artist, who blends his colours on his pallet, depends more on his eye, than on his knowledge.

knowledge. He works out his effect by a more laboured process; and yet he may produce a good picture in the end.

380 Nobody was better acquainted with the effects of sky, nor studied them with more attention, than the younger Vanderveldt. Not many years ago, an old Thames-watterman was alive, who remembered him well; and had often carried him out in his boat, both up and down the river, to study the appearances of the sky. The old man used to say, they went out in all kinds of weather, fair, and foul; and Mr. Vanderveldt took with him large sheets of blue paper, which he would mark all over with black, and white. The artist easily sees the intention of this process. These expeditions Vanderveldt called, in his Dutch manner of speaking, *going a skoying*.

401 The most remarkable instance of ingenious colouring I ever heard of, is in Guido's St. Michael. The whole picture is composed of blue, red, and black; by means of which colours the ideas of heaven and hell are blended together in a very extraordinary manner; and the effect exceedingly sublime; while both harmony, and chasteness are preserved in the highest degree.

406 *Let*

406 *Let shade predominate.* As a general rule, the half-tints should have more extent than the lights; and the shadows should equal both put together.—Yet why a predominancy of shade should please the eye more than a predominancy of light, would perhaps be difficult to explain. I can easily conceive, that a *balance* of light and shade may be founded in some kind of reason; but am at a loss to give a reason for a predominancy of either. The fact however is undoubted; and we must screen our ignorance of the principle, as well as we can.

440 This rule respects an *affected display of light*. If it be introduced as a focus, so as not to fall *naturally* on the several objects it touches, it disgusts. Rembrandt, I doubt, is sometimes chargeable with this fault. He is commonly supposed to be a master of this part of painting; and we often see very beautiful lights in his pictures, and prints: but as in many of them we see the reverse, he appears to have had no fixed principle. Indeed, few parts of painting are so much neglected, so easily transgressed, and so little understood, as the distribution of light.

444 *Opposition, and gradation* are the two grand means of producing effect by light. In  
the

the picture just given (l. 424. &c.) of the evening-ray, the effect is produced by *opposition*. Beautiful effects too of the same kind arise often from *catching lights*. —The power of producing effect by *gradation*, is not less forcible. Indeed, without a degree of *gradation*, *opposition* itself would be mute. In the picture just given of the evening-ray, the grand part of the effect, no doubt, arises from the *opposition* between the gloom, and the light: but in part it arises also from the *gradation* of the light, till it reach its point. It just tips

The tufted groves; but all its splendor pours  
On yonder castled cliff. —————

- 447 The colours of animals often strongly illustrate the idea of *gradation*. When they soften into each other, from light to dark, or from one colour into another, the mixture is very picturesque. It is as much the reverse, when white and black, or white, and red, are patched over the animal in blotches, without any intermediate tints. Domestic cattle, cows, dogs, swine, goats, and cats, are often disagreeably patched: tho we sometimes see them pleasingly coloured with a graduating tint. Wild animals, in general, are more uniformly coloured,

coloured, than tame. Except the zebra, and two or three of the spotted race, I recollect none which are not, more or less, tinted in this graduating manner. The tiger, the panther, and other variegated animals have their beauty : but the zebra, I think, is rather a curious, than a picturesque animal. It's streaked sides injure it both in point of colour, and in the delineation of it's form.

467 *But rarely spread it on the distant scene.* In general perhaps a landscape is best lightened, when the light falls on the middle parts of the picture ; and the foreground is in shadow. This throws a kind of natural retiring hue throughout the landscape : and tho the *distance be in shadow*, yet that shadow is so faint, that the retiring hue is still preserved. This however is only a general rule. In history-painting the light is properly thrown upon the figures on the foreground ; which are the *capital part* of the picture. In landscape the middle grounds commonly form *the scene*, or the *capital part* ; and the foreground is little more, than an appendage. Sometimes however it happens, that a ruin, or some other capital object on the foreground, makes the *principal part of the scene*. When that is the case,

case, it should be distinguished by light; unless it be so situated as to receive more distinction from shade.

482 *A fiercer splendor opens to our view all his terrific features.* It is very amusing, in mountainous countries, to observe the appearance, which the same mountain often makes under different circumstances. When it is invested with light mists; or even when it is not illumined, we see it's whole summit perhaps under one grey tint. But as it receives the sun, especially an evening-sun, we see a variety of fractures, and chasms gradually opening, of which we discovered not the least appearance before.

488 Tho the objects may lessen in due proportion, which is called *keeping*; tho the graduating hue of retiring objects, or the *aerial perspective*, may be just; and tho the light may be distributed according to the rules of art; yet still there may not be that general result of harmony, which denotes the picture *one object*: and as the eye may be misled, when it has the *several parts* before it, the best way of examining it as a *perfect whole*, is to examine it in such a light, as will not admit the investigation of *parts*.

529 *Others,*

529 *Others, &c.* Some painters copy exactly what they see. In this there is more mechanical precision, than genius. Others take a *general, comprehensive view* of their object; and marking just the *characteristic points*, lead the spectator, if he be a man of taste, and genius likewise, into a truer knowledge of it, than the copier can do, with all his painful exactness.

563 *Why then degrade, &c.* If by bringing the figures forward on the foreground, you give room for *character*, and *expression*, you put them out of place as *appendages*, for which they were intended.

581 *Oft slowly winding, &c.* The machine itself here described is picturesque: and when it is seen in *winding motion*, or (in other words) when half of it is seen in perspective, it receives additional beauty from contrast. In the same manner a cavalcade, or an army on it's march, may be considered as *one object*; and derive beauty from the same source. Mr. Gray has given us a very picturesque view of this kind, in describing the march of Edward I;

As down the steep of Snowdon's shaggy side  
He wound with toilsome march his long array.

Stout Gloucester stood aghast in speechless trance:

To arms! cried Mortimer; and couched his quivering lance.

Through

Through a passage in the mountain we see the troops winding round at a great distance. Among those nearer the eye, we distinguish the horse and foot; and on the foreground, the action, and expression of the principal commanders.

The ancients seem to have known very little of that source of the picturesque, which arises from perspective: every thing is introduced in front before the eye: and among the early painters we see very little more attention paid to it. Raphael is far from making a full use of the knowledge of it; and I believe Julio Romano makes still less.

I do not remember meeting any where with a more picturesque description of a line of march, than in Vaillant's travels into the interior parts of Africa. He was passing with a numerous caravan, along the borders of Caffraria. I first, says he, made the people of the hord, which accompanied me, set out with their cattle: and a little after my cattle followed; cows, sheep, and goats; with all the women of the hord, mounted on oxen with their children. My waggons, with the rest of my people, closed the rear. I myself, mounted on horseback, rode backwards, and forewards. This caravan  
on

on it's march, exhibited often a singular, and amusing spectacle. The turns it was obliged to make in following the windings of the woods, and rocks, continually gave it new forms. Sometimes it intirely disappeared : then suddenly, at a distance, from the summit of a hill, I again discovered my vanguard slowly advancing perhaps towards a distant mountain : while the main body, following the track, were just below me.

595 This rule indeed applies to all other objects : but as the ship is so large a machine, and at the same time so complicated a one, it's *character* is less obvious, than that of most other objects. It is much better therefore, where a vessel is necessary, to put in a few touches for a skiff ; than to insert some disagreeable form for a ship, to which it has no resemblance. At the same time, it is not at all necessary to make your ship so accurate, that a seaman could find no fault with it. It is the same in figures : as appendages of landscape there is no necessity to have them exactly accurate ; but if they have not the *general form*, and *character* of what they represent, the landscape is better without them.

603 *They seem, &c.* *Rapid motion* alone, and that *near the eye*, is here censured. We should be careful not to narrow too much the circumscribed sphere of art. There is an art of seeing, as well as of painting. The eye must in part enter into the deception. The art of painting must, in some degree, be considered as an act of convention. General forms only are imitated, and much is to be supplied by the imagination of the spectator.—It is thus in drama. How absurdly would the spectator act, if instead of assisting the illusion of the stage, he should insist on being deceived, without being a party in the deception?—if he refused to believe, that the light he saw, was the sun; or the scene before him, the Roman capital, because he knew the one was a candle-light, and the other, a painted cloth? The painter therefore must in *many things* suppose deception; and only avoid it, where it is too *palpably gross* for the eye to suffer.

636 Guido's air, no doubt, is often very pleasing. He is thought to have excelled in imagining the angelic character; and, as if aware of this superiority, was fond of painting angels. After all, however, they, whose taste is formed on the simplicity  
of

of the antique, think *Guido's air*, in general somewhat theatrical.

638 *Skilful they, &c.* The greatest obstruction to the progress of art arises from the prejudices of conceited judges; who, in fact, know less about the matter, than they, who know nothing: inasmuch as truth is less obvious to error, than it is to ignorance. Till they can be prevailed on to return upon their steps, and look for that criterion in nature, which they seek in the half-perished works of great names; the painter will be discouraged from pursuing knowledge in those paths, where Raphael, and Titian found it.

639 *What if these compare, &c.* Bruyere observes, that the inferior critic judges only by *comparison*. In one sense all judgment must be formed on comparison. But Bruyere, who is speaking of poetry, means, that the inferior critic has no scale of judging of a work of art, but by comparing it with some other work of the same kind. He judges of Virgil by a comparison with Homer; and of Spencer by comparing him with Tasso. By such criticism he may indeed arrive at certain truths; but he will never form that masterly judgment, which he might do by comparing the work before him  
with

with the great archetypes of nature, and the solid rules of his art.—What Bruyere says of the critic in poetry, is very applicable to the critic in painting. The inferior critic, who has travelled, and seen the works of many great masters, supposes he has treasured up from them the ideas of perfection; and instead of judging of a picture by the rules of painting, and it's agreement with nature, he judges of it by the arbitrary ideas he has conceived; and these too very probably much injured in the conception. From this comparative mode of criticizing, the art receives no advancement. All we gain, is, that one artist paints better than another.

END OF THE NOTES.

# EXPLANATION

OF THE

## PRINTS.

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TWO facing page 19. It is the intention of these two prints to illustrate how very adverse the idea of *smoothness* is to the *composition* of landscape. In the second of them the *great lines* of the landscape are exactly the same as in the first; only they are *more broken*.

Two facing p. 75. The first of these prints is meant to illustrate the idea of *simple illumination*. The light falls strongly on *various* parts; as indeed it often does in nature. But as it is the painter's business to take nature in her most beautiful form, he chuses to throw his light more into a *mass*, as represented in the second print, which exhibits the *same landscape*, only better enlightened. When we merely take the *lines* of a landscape from nature; and *inlighten* it

\*

(as

(as we must often do) from our own taste, and judgment, the massing of the light must be well attended to, as one of the great sources of beauty. It must not be scattered in spots; but must be brought more together, as on the rocky side of the hill in the second print: and yet it must graduate also in different parts; so as not to appear affected.

One print facing p. 77. The idea of *gradation* is here farther illustrated; according to the explanation in p. 76.—The inscription is that admired one of Cæcilia Metella, the daughter of Metellus, and the wife of Crassus; in which, with so much elegant, and tender simplicity, her name is divided between her father, and her husband.

One facing p. 79. This print exemplifies a *simple mode* of *tinting* a drawing, as explained in the text. The colouring of this print (which is done by hand) has added a little to the expence of the book: but it was thought necessary to compleat the scheme. —It was coloured by a relation of mine; Mr. Gilpin, drawing-master at Paddington-green; who in all the copies I have seen, has illustrated my ideas very satisfactorily; and who, as far as the recommendation of a partial kinsman may go, deserves mine.

One

One facing p. 85. This print is an explanation of a few rules in perspective; just sufficient for the use of common landscape.

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E R R A T A.

For, *because he could not have given it, read, because it receives.*  
page 16.

For, *if the colour be not changeable, it is the harmony we admire,*  
*read, if the colours be not changeable, it is the harmony of*  
*them, which we admire.* p. 23.

For, *circumstance of the composition, read, circumstances of the composition.* p. 76.

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Books published by the same Author.

Lives of several Reformers.

Lectures on the Church-catechism.

An Essay on prints.

Picturesque remarks on the river Wye.

————— on the lakes of Cumberland, and Westmoreland.

————— on the highlands of Scotland.

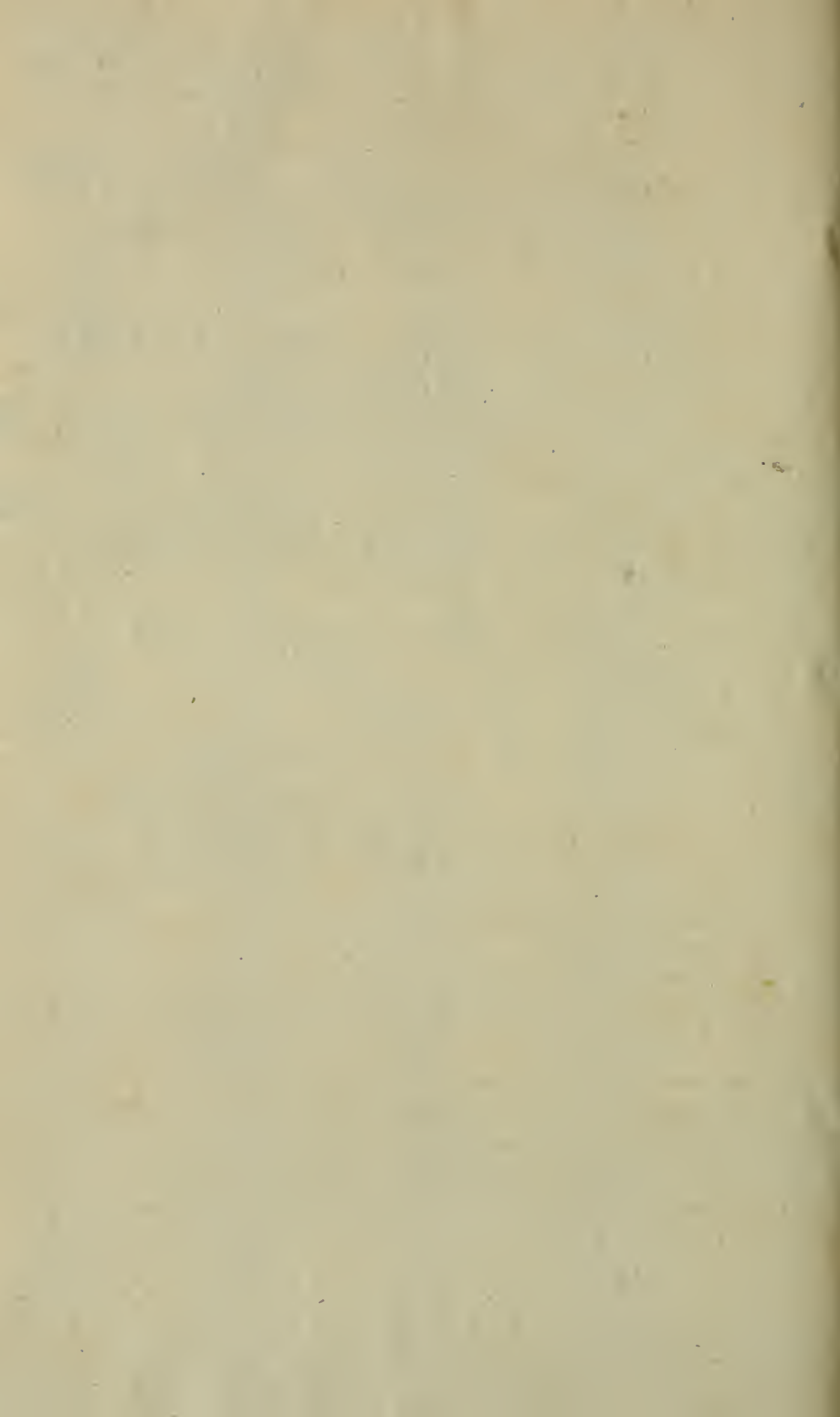
————— on Forest-scenery.

An Exposition of the New Testament, pointing out the  
*leading sense, and connection* of the sacred writers.

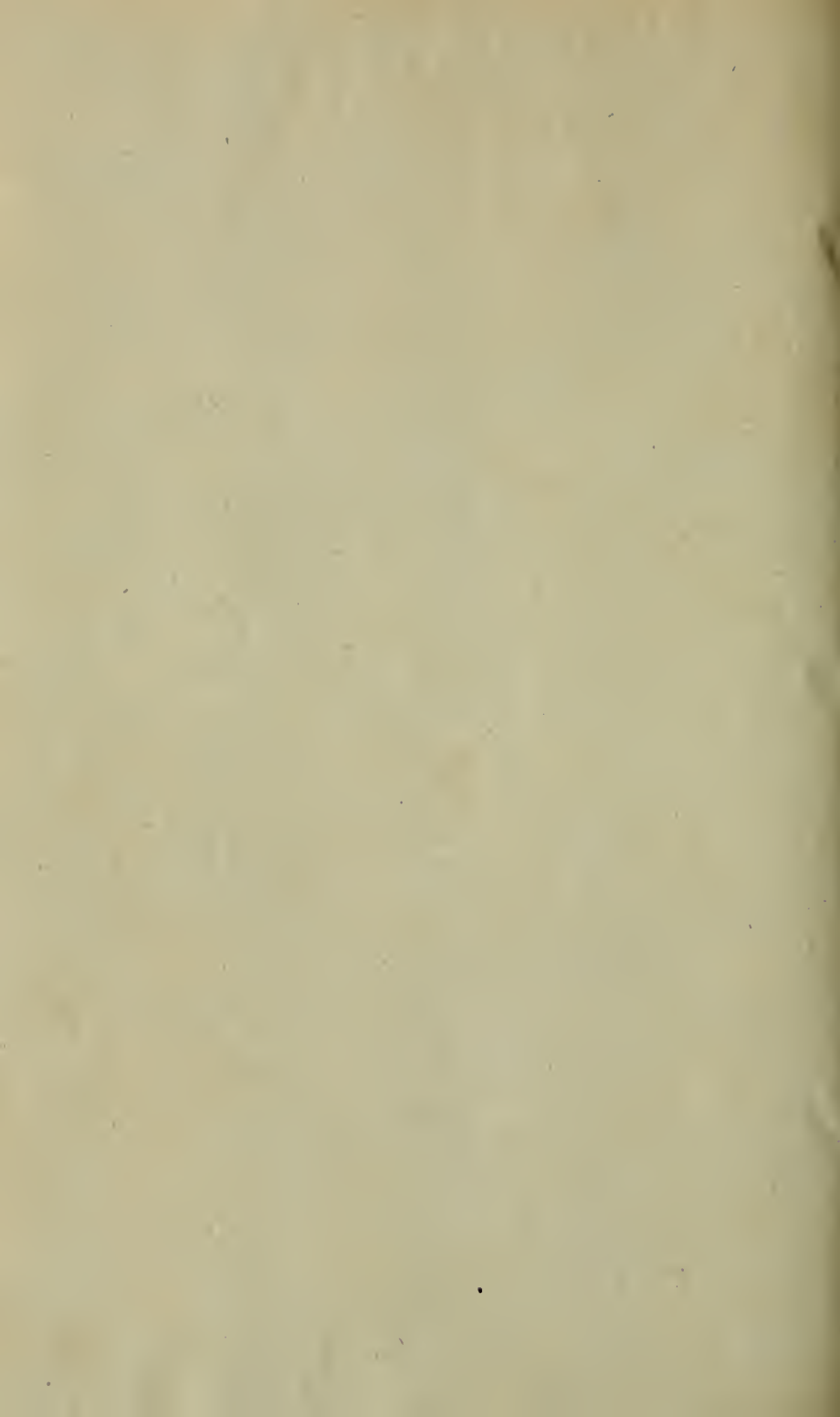
Life of John Trueman, &c. pr. 10d. or 26 copies for 1*£*.  
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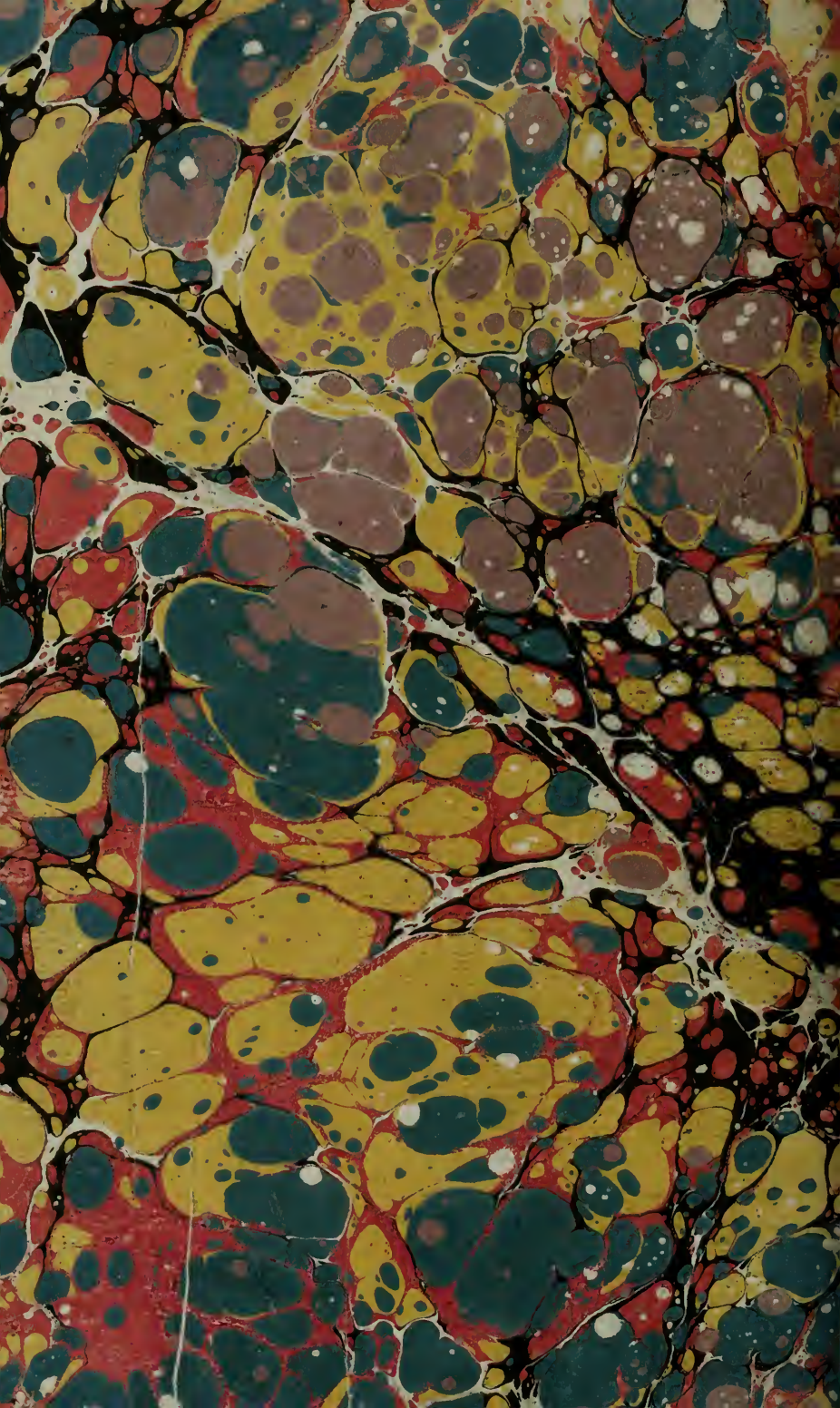














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